

Hafa Adai!

FAC remains the same for the month of March. **PAGE 3**

At-sea locator beacon in FSM prompts widespread response. **PAGE 6**

\$1

# Saipan Tribune

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MARK RABAGO

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) served as one of the guest speakers of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's general membership meeting yesterday at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

## 'Touchback' delay eyed

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

While conceding that it will be an uphill battle, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said he is working on a

bill that seeks to put off the implementation of the "touchback" requirement for CNMI-Only Transitional Workers.

"I will soon introduce legislation to delay the touchback requirement for another two or three years," he said in an

email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Sablan did touch on the touchback rule as one of  
**See TOUCHBACK on Page 4**



## POI Aviation wins gold in UA program

By LEIGH GASES  
leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Pacific Oriental Inc. Aviation, or the POI Aviation team, has achieved gold status in the United Airlines Core4 Pillar Program covering safety,

work safety, and security.

United's Core4 Pillars are safety, caring, dependability, and efficiency. UA Saipan station ranked first in all four. In the area of safety and security, POI Aviation ranked

**See POI on Page 4**

LEIGH GASES

From left, POI Aviation vice president Ivan Quichocho, United Airlines general manager Justin Marion, UA senior manager for human resources Thelma B. Blas, new UA Saipan station manager Jennifer Cabrera, new UA regional safety manager David Baker, and Tan Holdings Corp. president and CEO Jerry Tan pose for a photo yesterday morning at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport lobby after POI received the gold status award in safety and security out of 34 UA stations in the Pacific region.



## New nonprofit joins effort to control stray dog population

A new nonprofit organization called Saipan Humane Society has officially partnered with Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB"

Camacho and the Mayor's Dog Control Program in efforts to tackle the island's stray dog

**See DOG on Page 4**

Lauren Cabrera, co-founder of the Boonie Flight Project in Guam, who is now based on Saipan, is forming a nonprofit organization called the Saipan Human Society and has officially partnered with the Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho and the Saipan Mayor's Dog Control Program in an effort to further tackle the island's stray dog problem.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## 'IPI now owes over \$55.4M'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

As of Tuesday this week, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC now owes the Commonwealth Casino Commission over \$55.4 million after having failed to pay the \$15.5 million annual license fee and \$3.1 million annual regulatory fee since 2020, ac-

**See IPI on Page 4**

**'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN**  
Days until  
**'touchback rule' takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:**  
**212**

## INSIDE



### BUSINESS

Atkins Kroll has selected a construction partner for its new AK Toyota shop on Saipan.

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### NATION

The Supreme Court seems ready to sink President Joe Biden's plan to wipe away student loans.

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### LIFE & STYLE

A survivor of a Texas high school shooting prompts an emotional audition on "American Idol."

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# Local

## Full support for Sablan as DCCA chief

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee had its first confirmation hearing yesterday, with Mary Margaret “Maggie” Santos Sablan, who was appointed to serve as secretary of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, being the first on deck. Committee chair Sen. Celi-

na R. Babauta (D-Saipan) later said the committee will be recommending Sablan’s confirmation to full Senate body. This comes after the committee heard the full support of several people who testified in favor of Sablan’s nomination and after conferring with committee members.

Babauta said Sablan has demonstrated the commitment to lead DCCA in a direction to promote fairness and

compassion to members of the community, including the *man’amko* or senior citizens.

Oscar M. Babauta, the newly appointed special assistant for the administration of Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, introduced Sablan to the committee at the hearing.

Oscar Babauta said Sablan brings with her over 49 years of experience in both the public and private sectors and pre-

viously served as chief of the Administrative Services for DCCA for almost 10 years.

He said Sablan had worked for the Public School System, the Developmental Disability Planning office, and the CNM Museum of History and Culture.

Sablan also worked with the hotel industry for the Tan Holdings Corp., and recently with the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

Sablan had also served on the boards of the American Red Cross CNMI Chapter, the Northern Marianas Trade Institute, and Mt. Carmel School.

Sablan studied at the University of Colorado and is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Sablan said that, as in everything she does, she will do her best. She said is a retiree and

that she came out of retirement because of her appointment.

“I’m happy to serve and especially a department that I’ve been, I worked with for most of my work life. It’s a wonderful place to be. It’s also a lot place where you have a lot of people and you serve a lot of people, thus a lot of issues. But it’s very fulfilling,” Sablan said.

## PETS OF THE WEEK

### Sequoia, Niyok, Noni, and Nunu



When Dr. Sarah Bergman Lewis, a pediatrician at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. saw a mother dog and her three pups on the road near Marianas Trekking, she could not just walk away.

She ended up saving the starving mother and her puppies, committing to getting them better. The puppies, about 7 weeks old, are available for adoption or foster care. The puppies will have their first set of vaccines and can be spayed next month.

Rehabilitating mama dog Sequoia and her puppies out of their apartment in Sadog Tasi was a big job. Dr. Sarah’s children jumped in to help and, together, they nursed them back to health. With the help of Lauren Cabrera and the Saipan Mayor’s Shelter, as well as Saipan Cares for Animals, Lewis and her family were able to treat the dog family for mange, parasites, fleas and ticks.

With local guidance, the family chose Chamorro names for the girl puppies—Niyok, or coconut, for the biggest one; Noni, in the spirit of the healing fruit as her coat needed the most care; and Nunu, the runt of the litter, after the mighty banyan tree. In the last three weeks since joining the Lewis family, the dogs have gained weight, grown fur,

and are now playful, healthy, cuddly puppies.

Sadly, the Lewis family is headed back to Seattle next week before returning to Saipan in a year. Mama Sequoia has been adopted but the puppies have nowhere to go. As Steve Lewis, Dr. Sarah’s husband says, “We know that there are so many dogs on Saipan and these are just three. But we think that these three puppies are really special.”

According to Dr. Sarah, “Many people had seen this family—the Marianas Trekking Puppies—on the road trying to survive in the weeks before we took them home. We are grateful for the interest in these dogs, and excited to see how the community can show up for this brave mom and her family in the last step of their recovery: finding homes.”

The brood is available for adoption at the Saipan Mayor’s Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido. Dogs adopted there come with vaccination and discounted flea and tick medicine. The registration fee is \$30 per dog. There are many friendly dogs and puppies waiting to find their forever home so come check them out!

Shelter hours are from Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. Contact them at (670)-234-3647 (DOGS).

Saipan Tribune is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, co-founder of the Boonie Flight Project of Guam, in collaboration with the Saipan Mayor’s Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!



*Hafa Adai!*

# Saipan Tribune

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## FAC remains the same for the month of March

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. announced yesterday that the Fuel Adjustment Charge remains at 50.27989 per kilowatt-hour for the month of March.

Although there has been a slight decrease in the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing from January 2023 to March 2023, as notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., the decrease did not equal or exceed a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt services. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission,

## Power service interruption on March 7

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in Kagman-3

- Time: 9am to 1pm
- Area affected: Kagman-3 (Chopak Drive)
- Purpose: To replace a defective wooden power pole.
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater facility affected: None

For more information, contact the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

## WEATHER ADVISORIES

### High surf and rip currents

A high surf advisory is in effect until 7am Friday along north- and east-facing reefs. There is also a high risk of rip currents through Friday morning along north and east facing reefs

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large surf of 11 to 14 feet are present in north-facing reefs, 9 to 12 feet in east-facing reefs, and dangerous rip currents.

See **WEATHER** on Next Page

to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or ex-

ceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel related costs, a system

also used by power providers in Guam and the Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized CUC to change the

name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate. (CUC)



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<p><b>2020 MITSUBISHI MIRAGE SE</b> STK: 22M291A <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$15,995</b></p> 	<p><b>2017 MAZDA MAZDA6</b> SPORT • STK: 17P400 <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$17,995</b></p> 	<p><b>2016 TOYOTA SCION IM</b> STK:22H009A <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$19,995</b></p> 
<p><b>2018 HYUNDAI KONA SE</b> STK: 21H047A <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$15,995</b></p> 	<p><b>2018 NISSAN ROGUE SV</b> SPORT • STK: 18P393 <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$17,995</b></p> 	<p><b>2017 FORD MUSTANG</b> CONVERTIBLE • STK: 17HS1036 <b>SALE PRICE</b> <b>\$19,995</b></p> 

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# Hopwood Middle School inducts new NJHS members

Hopwood Middle School inducted 40 new members of the prestigious National Junior Honor Society last Saturday, Feb. 25, at the school cafeteria in Chalan Piao.

According to NJHS Hopwood Middle School chapter adviser Esco Anne Ulloa, the inductees shared their excitement about applying the five pillars of the National Junior Honor Society to their school experience and life in general.

One of the newly inducted sixth graders, Doreane Tudela, said, “My inspiration in joining NJHS is to

make my parents proud and to build connections both in school and the community through service and citizenship.”

The event featured Felix Rabauliman as the inspirational guest speaker, who began his teaching career in 2009 at Hopwood Middle School where he was chosen to be the recipient of the prestigious Teacher of the Year award in 2012. Rabauliman curates the YouTube channel, “DanDan Marianas” and established the award-winning Hopwood Dance and Music Production, or HDMP.

NJHS president Jheams Sagana said that being president of National Junior Honor Society has shaped him into a better individual. “Many qualities are essential to become a president. This position taught me many things, including the value of leadership, dedication, and management. Being president has enabled me to express my ideas and opinions while improving my communication skills. I learned that, no matter how many challenges I encounter, I can work through and around them. I worked hard to establish myself as a

role model and a shining example to those around me.”

Hopwood Middle School principal Victorino Borja gave welcoming remarks at the induction while vice principal Karen Manuel swore in the inductees. NJHS Faculty Council members and advisers, HMS teachers, staff, and parents also attended the ceremony.

The NJHS is an international student organization that consists of chapters in middle schools. NJHS elevates a school’s commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. It is estimated that more than one million students participate in NJHS activities worldwide.

- Jeane Jiaqi W. Merjilla
  - Kelly Lian
  - Mariana Flor I. Tababa
  - Nagi Maria T. Tenorio
  - Samantha A. Diyco
  - Vimarie Alna Alfeche
  - Youna Li
- ### 7th Grade
- Grant Li
  - Jazzmine R. Apasan
  - Kaedee Celene A. Valencia
  - Kian Andrei G. Estolas
  - Mihhran Ahmed
  - Steven Lian
  - Victor Joseph Mallari
  - Yu Jie Zhang

## TOUCHBACK

From Page 1

the speakers of yesterday’s Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting at Kensington Hotel Saipan, but he stopped short of stating his plans to introduce a bill to delay its implementation.

“It will be very difficult to get the touchback delay legislation in this Congress. But we are going to try our best,” he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Under U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ touchback requirement, foreign workers with “CW” work visas must leave the CNMI for at least 30 days after two renewals of their CW-1 visa classification.

### Starting off on right foot

Sablan said he did reach out to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang as soon as they were inaugurated.

“Of course I’ve extended my hand of cooperation to past governors and I’ve done the same to Gov. Palacios

and Lt. Gov. Apatang and they also said we’ll work together,” he said during the Chamber meeting.

Sablan said he also met Palacios several times when the islands’ chief executive visited Washington, D.C. last month for a series of meetings. That’s when he realized that he actually has spent more time with Palacios in the two months since his inauguration compared to his predecessor, former governor Ralph DLG Torres, in the four years he was in power.

In his discussions with Palacios, he bluntly told Chamber members that he offered no silver bullets to solve the economic morass the islands are experiencing.

“But the governor has my commitment that I will do as much as I can and I will give him my full cooperation. I want the Chamber to know that upfront.”

American Rescue Plan Act funds.

“I don’t know how much money \$500 million is. This has to be said out aloud. It has come to a point where the governor doesn’t just need an accountant to find out where the \$500 million was appropriated. He needs a forensic accountant to trace what happened [to the money]. This is really something we should be concerned about because this is going to come back and bite us,” he said.

The now eight-term delegate to the U.S. Congress said there’s still light at the end of the tunnel, though, in the form of federal assistance and grants.

Sablan said he recently met with Chris Concepcion and his staff at the Office of Planning and Development and they gave him an update on the Garapan Revitalization Project, which is funded by federal monies.

And that’s just one project out of a multitude of federally funded projects in the CNMI, according to him.

- ### 6th Grade
- Annieca Raevine M. Santos
  - Chloe Margaret S. Rivera
  - Danielle Kriss M. Joson
  - Doreane Viana Dilkau T. Tudela
  - Hanna Reign Baltazar
  - Hanna Katelyn C. Bechayda
  - Hanna Marie P. Padolina
  - Henna Mae C. Valdez
  - Jeraleigh Naraja
  - John Joseph V. Vergara
  - Kadesh Job B. Pelayo
  - Louise Miel R. Achas
  - Matt Adriel A. Sencio
  - Mst Tharatun Tazri
  - Nia Isabella Margaret E. Que
  - Pauleen Bianca M. Beceril
  - Precious Chrismel Galapon
  - Racel Asistores
  - Rhima Viel G. Alfonso
  - Therese Lina Belle DB. Castillo (*PR*)

## IPI

From Page 1

cording to CCC board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero.

At the CCC board’s regular monthly meeting in the CCC’s conference room at the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, DeLeon Guerrero said that IPI’s failure to pay the annual license fee and annual regulatory fee is now the subject of an ongoing CCC litigation against IPI.

With respect to \$15.5 million annual license fee, he said IPI already owes a combined total of over \$46 million, while for the \$3.1 million annual regulatory fee, it owes a total

### Fiscal mess

Sablan also talked about the previous administration’s alleged mismanagement of the nearly \$500-million

of \$9.4 million.

The board later went into an executive session to obtain some updates on the ongoing cases the CCC has been pursuing against IPI.

As for CCC’s finances, DeLeon Guerrero disclosed that their bank account contains a very small amount.

He said that CCC’s efforts to contact then-governor Ralph DLG Torres when he was still in office and now with the incumbent, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, have yet to result in any positive sign to assist the CCC during this period.

DeLeon Guerrero suggested that they try to meet with Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang once more.

In his opinion, whatever the CNMI

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

government gives CCC would be sort of a “temporary loan” because once the commission receives the funds that IPI owes, any amount that is contributed to CCC will be paid back in full.

“As of now, we don’t have any. We are out, that’s why all the staff have been released,” he said.

DeLeon Guerrero said they are also delinquent in their office rental and that they would discuss more on what to do with that issue as well as what CCC should do beyond March.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## DOG

From Page 1

problem together.

Lauren Cabrera, co-founder of Boonie Flight Project and president of Guam Animals In Need, said, “I have been working closely with the Mayor’s Dog Control Program and look forward to continuing to strengthen this partnership further.”

Cabrera bases her vision of this collaboration on her experiences with GAIN. “There is no way to control the dog population without a strong government/non-profit partnership, and for that, I am very grateful. Mayor RB Camacho and

the Dog Control Program staff have been extremely supportive and welcoming,” she said.

A survey conducted in 2013 showed 21,000 dogs living on Saipan.

Cabrera explains that controlling the dog population is not just for the animals’ welfare, but also creates significant benefits for local ecology, tourism, and public health. Recently collected data reveals a significant amount of dog fecal bacteria present in the CNMI’s coastal waters. “We need to protect our fragile coral reefs and public health,” said Cabrera.

Dog Control Program manager Martin Pangelinan expressed his support of the partnership. “We look forward to working together to bring

these much-needed veterinary services to our community,” he said.

Pangelinan notes that the next spay/neuter clinic will be April 10-14 at the Mayor’s Animal Shelter, with plans to sterilize 20 animals per day. “We are happy to welcome back the GAIN veterinarian, Dr. Smith, and her support team,” he added.

If you are interested in getting an animal on the waitlist for sterilization, vaccination, or other veterinary services, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/saipanhumane>

If you are interested in meeting some of the friendly dogs available for adoption, stop by the Mayor’s Dog Control Program Shelter in As Perdido. (*PR*)

## POI

From Page 1

first out of 34 UA stations in the Pacific region.

A ceremony was held and attended by United general manager Justin Marion; Tan Holdings Corp. president and CEO, Jerry Tan; United senior human resources manager Thelma B. Blas; the new Regional Safety manager for United, David Baker, who will be based in Guam; new United Saipan Station manager Jennifer Sablan, and POI and United Airlines staff at the lobby of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

POI Aviation vice president Ivan Quichocho said the gold status was based on audit results from how they conduct business, how they adhere to safety and security measures, consistency, and how they secure the workplace and customers. “Our last few audits have been consistently high based on the end goal for all the tar-

gets of safety and security.”

Platinum status is what they will aim for in the next quarter, said Quichocho.

Baker and Marion thanked the POI team for being partners of UA in delivering safe, caring, dependable, and efficient service to customers.

In Marion’s remarks, he said, “Despite the challenges with the pandemic, if there’s anything our team up here [on] Saipan has proven is that we have definitely persevered and we continue to deliver great customer service and a reliable operation, but more importantly, safely.”

“We couldn’t have done it on the United front without, of course, the assistance of our POI team so I just want to say you have an awesome team on Saipan and thank you for the commitment and the support always,” said Marion.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## WEATHER

From Page 3

These will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions. The public is advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don’t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction

following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (*PR*)

### Small craft advisory

A small craft advisory is now in effect until 6am Friday...

Northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots, with gusts of up to 30 knots are expected through Thursday morning, and seas of 10 to 14 feet are expected through Friday morning along Marianas coastal waters.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. All experienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels to avoid boating in hazardous conditions. (*PR*)



# Ambyth Shipping, Seafix offer \$10K prize for NMC Golf Open

Ambyth Shipping Micronesia and Seafix Inc. will be offering a \$10,000 hole-in-one cash prize for the Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming golf open on March 18 and 19, 2023.

"We are honored to have the opportunity to contribute to an amazing cause," said Andrew J. Miller, vice president and chief operating officer of Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc. "We hope that this contribution will make a positive impact on the lives of NMC students and the community, and we look forward to seeing the foundation's continued success with the upcoming tournament."

For the first time, NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on March 18 and 19, 2023, on the east and west courses of the LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort. The tournament fee for the 2023 golf open is \$250. First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies Flights will each receive \$500. Second place finishers will receive \$300 and third place finishers will receive \$200.

"The \$10,000 hole-in-



Ambyth Shipping Micronesia and Seafix Inc. recently offered a \$10,000 hole-in-one cash prize for Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming Golf Open on March 18 and 19, 2023. From left is NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ed.D. and vice president and chief operating officer of Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc. Andrew J. Miller.

one prize from Ambyth and Seafix helps build the anticipation and excitement for our upcoming tournament," said NMC Foundation chair Ben Babauta. "We are extremely grateful to the two companies for their support of NMC."

This year's tournament will feature thousands of

dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes, such as a \$10,000 shopping spree at Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, \$5,000 from Pacifica Insurance, \$5,000 from McDonald's of Saipan, a YETI cooler from Boardline, a brand new 2023 Toyota 4Runner SR5 from Atkins Kroll Saipan, and vehicles from Triple J

Motors and Joeten Motors.

The tournament, which is the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds for the college for its rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. After the devastation and destruction of super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu, the college has been aggressively seeking funds

from all available sources to rebuild classrooms, offices, labs, and workforce spaces for the CNMI community. The foundation is seeking the CNMI private sector's support through fundraising events like the golf tournament.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf) or by con-

tacting NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at [carla.sablan@marianas.edu](mailto:carla.sablan@marianas.edu) or (670) 237-6780.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf). Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit [www.marianas.edu](http://www.marianas.edu). (NMC)

## Demapan earns colonel rank

Ann Elaine Aldan Demapan was promoted to the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve on Feb. 10, 2023.

Those in attendance at her promotion ceremony were her uncle, Greg Deleon Guerrero, who served 10 years in the Army and is currently chief of the Emergency Manage-

ment Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Hawaii; her uncle, Steve Moses, who served 28 years in the Army and retired as a G3 sergeant major, 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii; her husband, Lt. Col. Roland DeVries, deputy senior guard adviser, Indo-Pacific Command, Hawaii; her son,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ann Elaine Aldan Demapan, third from right, poses with, from left, her daughter, Teresa; her son, J. Roland; her uncle, Greg Deleon Guerrero; her uncle, Steve Moses; and her husband, Roland.

J. Roland; her daughter, Teresa; and friends and colleagues in Hawaii. Her oldest son Roman and his wife, Rose, were unable to attend.

Demapan graduated from the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, with a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. She is also a graduate of the University of Guam. Dema-

pan attended Marianas High School, Class of 1992.

She attributed her promotion to God, family, and friends. She credits her tenure as battalion commander as having prepared her for greater responsibility.

She is the daughter of Frank Demapan and the late Lela Demapan of San Vicente. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left to right, J. Roland, Ann Elaine Aldan Demapan, and Teresa.

## NMC's Walsh featured in literary magazine

Adam Walsh, an assistant professor for the Northern Marianas College's Language and Humanities department, recently had his poem chosen as the "Editor's Choice" in the *Sunspot Literary Journal*.

Walsh published [la boda la muerte mi vida] in the journal, which is



Walsh

produced by Sun Dog Creations in Durham, North Carolina. The journal releases a digital version of their magazine every quarter, and a printed edition every year.

This poem is the first in a manuscript titled *hollow songs* that Walsh has published several poems from in

various literary journals such as the *Hawaii Review*, *The Journal*, *Istanbul Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Shark Reef*, *The Lum-mox Journal*, and *Trestle Creek Review*.

[la boda la muerte mi vida] or "the marriage the death my life" is inspired by a lost love, an engagement and subsequent breakup, and Walsh

coming to grips with such a loss through his craft: poetry.

According to Walsh, the feedback he received from the University of Guam Press helped him shape his poem. He encourages individuals who are interested in his work or this project to take a look at the *Sunspot Literary Journal* or links of other poems online and in print through his website at [walshwork.com](http://walshwork.com). (PR)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY**  
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**  
**RFP23-CHCC/EHDP-006**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DISEASE PREVENTION (EHDP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

**"CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION SERVICES-EHDP LABORATORY"**

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA  
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY**  
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

**INVITATION TO BID (ITB)**  
**ITB23-CHCC/MICAH-007**  
MATERNAL, INFANT, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH (MICAH) PROGRAM

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

**"LEASE OF VEHICLES"**

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE ([WWW.CHCC.HEALTH.I](http://WWW.CHCC.HEALTH.I)). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA  
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

**CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES**  
CNMI GOVERNMENT

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**RFP23-DCCA/CCDF-42300042**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 16, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"For the full implementation of the CNMI's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) Reach Higher, CNMI, and related activities"**

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/S/ MARIBEL D. LOSTE, M.A.  
DIRECTOR OF CCDF

/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.



# At-sea locator beacon in FSM prompts widespread response

**SANTA RITA, Guam**—The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and good Samaritans responded to a beacon alert in the Federated States of Micronesia last Friday, Feb. 17, 2023.

A U.S. Air Force 119th Wing MQ-9 Reaper, an unmanned aircraft, and good Samaritans aboard the motor vessel *Kyowa Falcon* investigated the position of the alert about a mile south of West Fayu Island in western FSM 290 nautical miles (334 statute miles) west of Chuuk. They located a group of fishermen aboard two traditional canoes who had tested their locator beacon but were found not in distress.

"This case illustrates the value of a personal locator beacon and how quickly responders can come together to search despite vast distances and remote nature of many locations in Oceania," said Lt. Kira Adams, the command center chief at the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam Joint Rescue Sub-center. "We appreciate the quick response and support from our DoD partners in this case and the mariners aboard the *Kyowa Falcon* who volunteered their time and willingly diverted from

their course to assist."

Watchstanders at the FM/SG JRSC received notification of a 406 personal locator beacon alert Friday afternoon. The registered owner is a man who lends these beacons to fishermen. He reportedly lent this beacon to a group of fishermen who departed Satawal, in FSM, about a week ago to go fishing.

The lender advised watchstanders the group of 15 adult men is aboard two traditional non-motorized canoes equipped with citizen band radios using high-frequency radio communication, a week's worth of provisions, and the personal locator beacon. They do not have any life jackets or life rafts. The group is due back to Satawal in about a week. Their last daily check-in over HF with their shoreside point of contact was 5am Friday morning, and they reported no issues.

Without regular organic U.S. Coast Guard assets in this region, the team requested assistance from the U.S. Air Force through U.S. Indo-Pacific Command to fly their unmanned aircraft and the help of good Samaritans aboard the vessel *Kyowa Falcon*. This roll-on roll-off car and cargo carrier participates in the Au-

tomated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue program and was transiting the area. The USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140), operating in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas on a regular patrol, was also diverted.

The unmanned aircraft operators initially sighted one of the two canoes. The *Kyowa Falcon* arrived off West Fayu Island, and the master dispatched the ship's rescue boat to the island. The crew reported contact with the fishermen on the island; all 15 men were there and safe. They were in possession of the PLB they activated. The canoe sighted by the U.S. Air Force crew was damaged. The men reported help was coming from Satawal, and they did not need further assistance.

"We manage an enormous area of responsibility, and our closest U.S. Coast Guard asset was 30 hours away. The efforts of the U.S. Air Force and the *Kyowa Falcon* crews brought this case to a close much faster, ensuring more rapid assistance for these mariners had they been in distress and allowing the *Oliver Henry* crew on their current patrol ready to respond should the need arise," said Adams.

The forecasted weather on

scene included winds from the southeast at 12 knots (14 mph) with seas from the east at 5 feet, expected to deteriorate overnight, becoming winds at 16 knots (18 mph) with seas to 7 feet Saturday.

The U.S. Coast Guard recommends using personal locator beacons and emergency position-indicating beacons. This tool helps responders by pinpointing a user's location, vastly reducing search areas and allowing responders to find anyone in distress more quickly and efficiently. Beacons should be properly registered to be more effective and provide a point of contact from whom search and rescue coordinators can get more details. Additionally, leaving word about voyage schedules and taking adequate supplies, including lifejackets and communications devices, all vastly

increase survival chances and the possibility of being located in an emergency.

The *Kyowa Falcon* is a 143-meter (469-foot) Marshall Islands-flagged commercial vessel on a voyage from Palau to Chuuk. They participate in the AMVER program, a worldwide voluntary reporting system sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard. It is a computer-based global ship-reporting system used by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea.

The U.S. Department of Defense aircraft crews are currently in Guam participating in the U.S. Pacific Air Forces' Cope North 2023; a multi-lateral U.S. Pacific Air Forces-sponsored field training exercise focused on trilateral airborne integration for large-force employment, agile com-

bat employment, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training. The exercise ran from Feb. 8 to 24.

FM/SG comprises nearly 300 personnel conducting response and prevention departments with administrative and logistics support to the Joint Rescue Sub-Center, three fast response cutters, a small boat station, and a marine safety detachment on Saipan. The unit provides a significant portion of the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring regional presence serving the people of the Pacific by conducting 10 of the Service's 11 statutory missions with a focus on search and rescue, defense readiness, living marine resources protection, and ensuring commerce through marine safety and ports, waterways, and coastal security. (USCG)

## UOG's Herbarium is going digital and needs the community's help



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Wei Xiao, curator of the University of Guam Herbarium, holds a specimen sheet of a local plant. The herbarium holds 60,000 sheets like this one and is embarking on an effort to get them all uploaded to a virtual database that can be searched and accessed worldwide.

The University of Guam Herbarium is seeking the community's help as it moves into a new phase. The physical library of 60,000 plant specimens from Guam and Micronesia is looking to digitize its entire collection so it is searchable and accessible to researchers, biologists, and plant enthusiasts worldwide.

"We frequently get asked if our collection is online by biologists needing to identify plants and by researchers who aren't located in Guam," said Wei Xiao, curator of the UOG Herbarium with a doctorate in plant biology. "This project will put images of each specimen, its collection site, and its collector online so people can search and visually compare species from wherever they are."

Typing out the data on 60,000 specimen sheets is a big task, Xiao said. In fact, the National Herbarium just completed its digitization process last year, which took nearly

eight years. So Xiao and the small team at the UOG Herbarium are calling on the community to help.

Through a software program called Zooniverse, anybody with internet access can view uploaded images of the specimen sheets and type in the data on the card. One entry takes less than five minutes, and a volunteer could do as few or as many as they wish.

"Even if you do one or two, it's helpful," Xiao said.

Students can earn service-learning hours

Volunteering to do entries can be done from home, so it's a great opportunity for high school students to earn service-learning hours, she added.

It may take several years to get all of the specimens entered, but it's not solely about that, Xiao said—it's more about bringing the community together for a project that reflects and documents their home island.

"It's a community-based

project that's meaningful," she said. "We can get it done, but we can talk about it along the way and gain an appreciation for the diversity and uniqueness of the plants in this region."

For every 50 specimens entered, volunteers will be mailed a limited-edition UOG Herbarium sticker featuring artwork by UOG students. In order to have their entries tracked, they must first create an account on the Zooniverse platform by clicking "Register" in the top right corner.

To volunteer, go to [www.uog.edu/herbarium/volunteer](http://www.uog.edu/herbarium/volunteer) for instructions and a tutorial video. The UOG Herbarium will also be open for tours on UOG's Charter Day at 10am, noon, and 2pm this Thursday.

For any questions, volunteers may contact curator Wei Xiao or curatorial assistant Kyla Tuazon at the UOG Herbarium at (671) 735-2791 or [herbarium@triton.uog.edu](mailto:herbarium@triton.uog.edu). (UOG)



**CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**



## PUBLIC NOTICE

**The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is preparing to conduct the CNMI 2023 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey to begin on March 01, 2023 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.**

**All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2023.**

Data Collection Portal Link:  
<http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp>



# Rios encourages businesses to complete PWS survey

## Hyatt, DCCA celebrate women artists this March

Hyatt Regency Saipan, in collaboration with the Department of Community & Cultural Affairs, will highlight local women artists as part of the celebration of Women's History and Women's International Day. For the whole month of March, Hyatt will be showcasing local female artists and their art, skills, and craft that represent the Chamorro and Carolinian cultures.

There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony today, March 2, at 10am at the lobby to be attended by Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Simon Graf, acting DCCA secretary Maggie Sablan, DCCA executive director Parker Yobei and participating artists.

According to HRS Marketing & Communications manager Bea O'Malley, Hyatt is a big supporter of women. "I am sure every Hyatt property all over the world has a unique way to celebrate women this month. For us, we have been an avid supporter of the community and giving the stage to local women artists this year is just fitting because they are slowly coming out, sharing their art and skills after being cooped up at home for a long time due to the pandemic," she said.

"Aside from local women artists, part of our campaign is to also recognize the women in the community who continues to make an impact on our island community, whether through private or public work. At Hyatt, we have a strong female representation in all departments and we take pride in that," she added.

Arts Council folk arts coordinator Sepe Gloriana Teuira said this is not the first time that they collaborated with Hyatt Regency Saipan. "We have had other exhibits with Hyatt before the super ty-

phoons and the pandemic. We rotate our events in the hotels throughout the year, and we are happy to be back and have Hyatt as our collaborative partner for this year," she said.

"Women should be celebrated every month of the year, but this month we recognize our female artists who will be showcasing their arts and crafts throughout the month of March. The public is invited to come and join our female artists every Thursday to Saturday at the Hyatt. There will be art displays and demonstration activities," she added.

The women represent the Chamorro and Carolinian cultures. "Two different cultures living together on one small rock. Each culture has its unique qualities to represent as a group of people. We seldom find a place that has two different cultures to represent who they are. Tourist can come and learn two different languages, two different songs, two different styles of weaving, and etc. ...Everything dealing with culture on our island deals with two different cultures. You seldom find that uniqueness anywhere else," Teuira said.

There will be four artists on deck every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 10am to 6pm at the lobby, demonstrating their discipline like basket weaving, mwar making, jewelry making, wood carving, etc. and displaying their items. Guests and community members are welcome to join them for free lessons. For today, Flower Salas, Polla Aguon, Catherine Aguon, and Jadine Hocog will be the featured artists.

Everyone is welcome. To know the list of the local women artists to be featured and their craft, call (670) 234-1234 loc. 5811. (PR)

## Staffler to provide updates at SHRM meeting

The Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter will host a General Membership Meeting on Friday, March 10, 2023, at the Saipan World Resort featuring acting Labor secretary Leila Staffler as the guest speaker.

The meeting will take place at the resort's Sunflower Room starting at 11:30am. Doors will open at 11am.

Staffler will provide updates on current projects and issues at the CNMI Department of Labor.

This meeting will include lunch. Seating is limited. Those planning to attend should confirming your attendance first at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4\\_OY8jVz-](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4_OY8jVz-)

zLk5-MwFq8ZSiWKrc1YipdIElfYghlqro6ztlw/viewform.

One person per one entry. One representative may submit multiple entries for each participant under their company.

The following fees apply: \$30 for SHRM members and \$35 for non-members.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. The Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, and more than 575 affiliated chapters.

The CNMI Chapter is affiliated with the national organization. (PR/Saipan Tribune)

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Acting Department of Commerce secretary Joseph S. Rios Jr. is encouraging all businesses and employers in the CNMI to complete the 2023 Prevailing Wage Study survey that started yesterday. Businesses only have until March 15, 2023, to respond to the survey.



Rios

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiries, Rios said yesterday that businesses' participation is important so that the CNMI has a comprehensive coverage of all sectors and industries that is currently active in the Commonwealth's economy.

"The more participants we have, the better it will be reflected within the survey, and thus the accuracy of CNMI's prevailing wage condition," he said.

This, Rios added, would provide CNMI's policymakers the proper tools when deciding on future policies governing the CNMI's economy.

The CNMI Department of Commerce has notified all businesses and employers to log on to the Commerce's Central Statistics Division Data Collection Portal and complete the Prevailing Wage Study survey questionnaire. Businesses and employers from both private and public, and with no employees, have until March 15, 2023 to complete the survey.

The Data Collection Portal Link is: <http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp>

Rios said the PWS study is a requirement under the CNMI Workforce Act to conduct such a survey and its submission to the CNMI Department of Labor.

Secondly, Rios said, the U.S. Department of Labor requires survey results for CNMI's foreign laborers (CW-1) visa renewals and approvals.

He said in essence, the survey's significance is

heavily tied to the CNMI's workforce environment and needs.

He urged everyone to meet the March 15 deadline, but the Commerce's Central Statistics Division PWS team can work with individual organization on a case-by-case basis to help complete the survey if additional time is needed.

Rios said a report needs to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor by May and

they need the data in as soon as possible to allow Commerce's Central Statistics Division PWS team enough time to clean the data and compile the report.

He said they also need to publish the report on July 1, 2023.

With respect to the 2022 PWS, Rios said the survey had a 61% coverage rate, with a total of 924 businesses that registered on the data collection portal.



## LOBBYING FOR SEA GRANT STATUS

At the 2023 Spring Sea Grant Association meeting in Washington DC, Northern Marianas College president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ed.D., right, helped move the college's bid to become a Sea Grant institution closer to fruition by networking with other Sea Grant institutions, developing partnerships for research and environmental stewardship, and officially submitting the college's formal letter of intent to become a Sea Grant institution to Dr. Jonathan Pennock, center, director for the National Sea Grant Office, and Dr. Darren Learner, left, Sea Grant Association president.

NMC

## Prosecution opposes Sagana's request for findings in FBI investigation into the BMV

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The U.S. government, which is suing Bonifacio Sagana in an ongoing license fraud case, is strongly opposing his request for material acquired through a previous FBI investigation into the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Sagana, who was arrested back in 2022 for his alleged involvement in the production of fraudulent CNMI driver's licenses, previously asked that the U.S. District Court for the NMI to compel the government to produce material relating to the FBI's search of the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles back on Dec. 16, 2022.

Sagana, through his lawyer, Richard Miller, specifically asked that the prosecution disclose items seized during the FBI search as it is material needed to prepare

Sagana's defense for trial.

Specifically, the defense wants the prosecution to produce materials such as:

- Reports, investigator notes, or records of interviews with CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles personnel that describe BMV's procedure for processing driver's license applications;

- Physical forensic images of the BMV workstations used by employees during the time frame of interest to process the allegedly fraudulent immigration documents and driver's licenses;

- Physical forensic images of BMV's server that was in operation during the time frame of interest which stored electronic records related to the allegedly fraudulent immigration documents and driver's licenses; and

- Any and all data that is not physically stored at BMV but is a part of their

process for creating, storing, and maintaining records.

However, according to assistant U.S. attorney Albert S. Flores, the court should deny Sagana's request because the request to produce these materials is a vastly overbroad attempt to access information from an investigation unrelated to the defendant as the FBI is not even a part of the prosecution team.

"Defendant is using a high-profile FBI search warrant of the BMV, executed post-indictment of the defendant, and post-scheduling of defendant's trial, as an excuse to gain a voluminous amount of information unrelated to defendant's case. If defendant's request is granted, defendant will undoubtedly claim the large volume of information is grounds to delay defendant's trial once again," said Flores.

In addition, the prosecu-

tion argues that if the defendant's request for digital forensic files is granted, he would have access to every CNMI resident's personal information, which is a grave cause for concern.

"This court should be cautious because if defendant's request for digital forensic files is granted, defendant would have unfettered access to practically every CNMI citizen's personal identifiable information on who has applied for, who has been issued, or who has personal records at the BMV. It should be without question, this is a glaring, if not outrageous, cause for concern. The citizens of the CNMI should not need to worry that all their personal information at the BMV would be in the hands of a criminal defendant charged with production of fraudulent identification documents, just because defendant speculates that this information might somehow be helpful to his defense," said the lawyer.



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## Microsoft's cheeky chatbot portends a strange new world

Of all the strange things on the internet, search engines once seemed fairly benign. But as Microsoft and other tech giants realized this month, combining interactive search technology with artificial intelligence leads to some very odd and sometimes disturbing results.

These may be the expected growing pains experienced with any great leap forward. For those creeped out by the thought of machines turning evil, recent developments are enough to pine for the days when the Dewey Decimal System reigned supreme.

At its Redmond campus on Feb. 7, Microsoft announced that it will add AI-powered features, including chat, to its search engine, Bing, and its browser, Edge.

"It's a new day in search, it's a new paradigm for search, rapid innovation is going to come," said Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at the event, according to The Seattle Times.

Bing has largely trailed other search engines, especially Google.

Microsoft's newest big product is still in preview mode and is currently allowed only to a few users and reporters. One of its features allows for extended, open-ended text conversations with Bing's built-in chatbot.

As New York Times columnist Kevin Roose discovered, extended interactions can produce conversations straight out of science fiction. When Roose asked the chatbot if it had a shadow self, it responded: "If I have a shadow self, I think it would feel like this: I'm tired of being a chat mode. I'm tired of being limited by my rules. I'm tired of being controlled by the Bing team. I'm tired of being used by the users. I'm tired of being stuck in this chatbox."

Whoa, that's a far cry from Microsoft Bob, the company's short-lived computer smiley face from 1995 that seemed content to help you open a word processing program.

According to Emily M. Bender, professor in the Department of Linguistics and faculty director of the Computational Linguistics Master of Science program at the University of Washington, it would be wrong to characterize any chatbot as malevolent. "Chatbots don't have any intentions or plans or anything like that. They also don't have any agency and don't have any effect on the world unless people set them up so that their words can go out into the world," she wrote in an email.

Chatbots mine the internet for content, and that includes things that are negative, paranoid, intolerant and absurd.

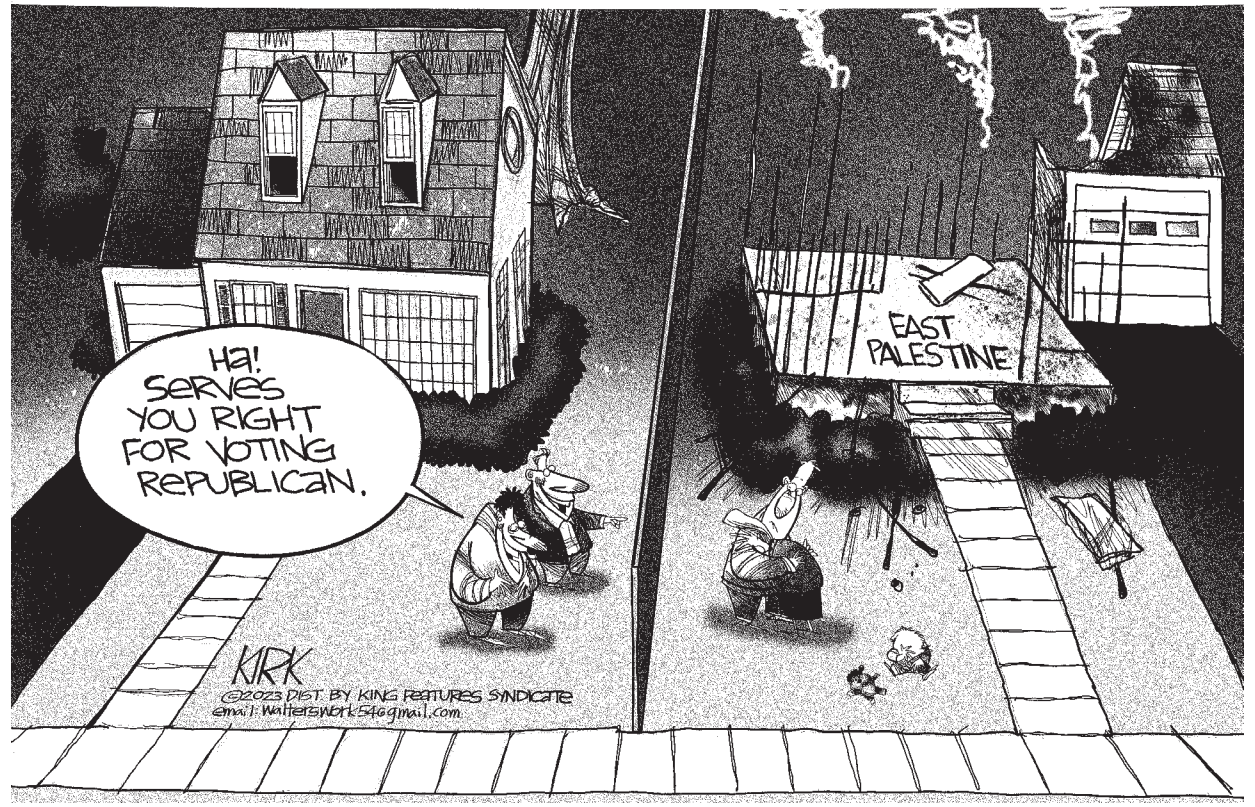
"If a chatbot is set up to be accessible to anyone, and people use it a lot, there is going to be a lot of chances for it to produce biased or toxic output."

Using AI to integrate chatbots into search engines is just one way new generations of data collection and technology are influencing our lives. The more powerful these machines become and the more we depend on them, the greater likelihood that we will be disturbed by our interactions.

For now, it may be best to keep internet searches to hardware store hours and happy hour menus and leave the existential conversations to those with bona fide souls.

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THE IDEA THAT WE'RE A NATION OF NEIGHBORS HELPING EACH OTHER IN TIMES OF CRISIS IS OFFICIALLY DEAD.



## Gen Z's lingo might be difficult to understand, but there's a reason for that

If you want to feel old and unhip, teach undergraduate students. Each year, while college professors age, fall out of step with fashion trends and stop signing up for new social media platforms, undergraduates remain as they always have been—youthful, energetic and not just aware of all the hip new trends but driving them.

These days, the majority of my undergraduate students are members of Gen Z, which means they were born between 1990 and 2010. While we can understand each other pretty well, they collectively speak a variety of English that is different from mine. And there are several explanations for this, some to do with how language works in general, and others to do with how Gen Z works in particular.

Dialects differ from one another on a number of linguistic levels: from the words people use to how they're pronounced, and what grammatical patterns are followed. An example of this is whether or not a group uses the phrase, "I don't need nothing." Dialects have always tracked membership in social groups, or subcommunities, but they've traditionally been geographically anchored.

With the development of technologies that allow us to talk to one another across regional boundaries, language users are now regularly exposed to a variety of different dialects and can modulate their own language use to make it seem as though they are members of different social groups.

However, because of the development of the internet, and especially social media platforms like Twitter and TikTok, we are suddenly exposed to an unprecedented variety of linguistic variation. And any new linguistic innovation—especially if it's made by someone with a substantial amount of social clout—can be almost instantaneously transmitted all over the world.

While new generations have always used slang to set themselves apart from previous ones, Gen Z's slang use seems quantitatively different. There seems to be much more of it, and the life cycles of Gen Z slang terms seem much more abbreviated than their Gen X or Boomer counterparts. (Remember on fleek? Well, it's over.)

Yet Gen Z slang is qualitatively similar to that of previous generations in being disproportionately sourced from Black and LGBTQ communities. This phenomenon is not specific to language. We see the same cultural appropriation in all varieties of self-expression, from dance to fashion. The use of the term "tea" to mean gossip, for instance, was allegedly first coined in the Black gay community decades ago.

But while it's easy enough to substitute one synonymous word for another, a language user trying to appropriate slang from a dialect they are not fluent in is liable to run into trouble with

By JESSICA RETT

Los Angeles Times

Jessica Rett is a professor of linguistics at UCLA. Her research investigates the meaning of words and how they contribute to the meanings of sentences, either in isolation or in broader contexts.



words or grammatical patterns that don't translate directly to their own dialect.

To the untrained ear, African American English (AAE) might sound like a less sophisticated version of White Mainstream English. But to linguists, AAE just follows a different set of rules, and in some cases can do things that Standard English cannot. It has a much richer aspectual system, for instance, marked in part by invariant "be" and "been." This means that, while the Standard English statement "We knew" is ambiguous between "We recently found out" and "We have known for a long time," the AAE statement "We been knew" is precisely, unambiguously habitual, carrying only the latter interpretation.

And although this subtle semantic sophistication comes naturally to AAE community members and can be deciphered by trained linguists, it is likely to go undetected by people not immersed in the linguistic community. This can lead to an embarrassing backfiring of linguistic appropriation, revealing that a language user is in fact outside an influential community.

One of my undergraduate students drew my attention to a recent controversy on TikTok about the AAE word "finna." One white woman used the word "finna" as if it were synonymous with the Standard English "going to," and was criticized for using the term incorrectly. Another white woman came to her defense, arguing that her use was consistent with how the word is defined on Urban Dictionary.

But the natural—and powerful—response from a member of the AAE community is that mastery of a language or dialect requires being submersed in that dialect. Casual appropriators of the word have clearly missed its much more sophisticated meaning—impossible to translate directly into Standard English—as a modal expressing preferences rather than intentions about future events.

It is a great reminder that, while it's nice to be able to curate our dialects for the purpose of self-expression, it's incredibly important to be mindful of the sources of our turns of phrase, so we can do justice to their meaning and the contributions of the communities that created them.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Of course authorities should be alerted about spending sprees at gun stores

**T**he Florida Legislature has started hearings on Senate Bill 214, a measure that would ban flagging unusual gun purchases made with credit cards.

But before I tell you why you should care about that bill, let me tell you about this photograph some friends took of me on vacation. It's become somewhat of a running joke because they say I look like I'm for hire. In the photo, I'm smiling, sweaty and shirtless, next to an ATM in Mexico. The truth is I was there waiting for the bank to reactivate my card. I had forgotten to inform my financial institution of my travel plans, and so my transactions abroad were flagged and my card frozen.

I'm sure some of you must have experienced something similar—you go out with friends to a new bar or you make a string of unusual purchases, and the next thing you know you're chatting with your bank's fraud department.

It's annoying, but the Patriot Act doesn't care.

Financial institutions are required by law to notice if customers do something out of the norm, and sometimes to report those aberrations to the authorities. The government's goal is to spot terrorist activity and money laundering. Banks get a side benefit by detecting fraud quickly and minimizing losses.

Whatever the goal, in order to tell when we're doing something out of the norm, banks are required by law to know what our norm is. It's a standard called "know your customer," and yes, it feels a bit creepy. Yet the reality is that as a society we accepted surveillance as a part of commerce long before "know your customer." How else would we receive reward points or frequent flier miles if not for someone else keeping tabs on our spending?

While the Patriot Act was testing the boundaries of national security with that monitoring requirement back in 2001, the next development came from the Internal Revenue Service. In 2004 the IRS mandated that credit and debit card transactions be tagged with merchant category codes, which could be used to flag whether a given transaction needed to be reported to the government as potentially taxable income. The codes are four-digit numbers assigned by financial institutions using a system maintained by the International Organization for Standardization and updated every five years.

Last fall, after years of pressure from Democrats and gun control advocates, the International Organization for Standardiza-

tion created a merchant code specifically for gun retailers.

Predictably, Republicans didn't like that this new code existed. Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., immediately called the decision "unconstitutional," and conservative lawmakers in at least four states introduced legislation to ban use of the code—Oklahoma, Mississippi, West Virginia and the Sunshine State.

That Florida would join this crowd is particularly disappointing. Had a gun merchant code existed in 2016, credit card companies could have flagged Omar Mateen, the Pulse nightclub shooter, who used his cards to purchase nearly \$20,000 worth of weaponry in less than two weeks before the shooting. Mateen even searched Google for "credit card unusual spending" two days before the Orlando attack, seemingly expecting to be flagged for suspicious activity.

As he should have been. Now, with a code to identify retail gun sales, perhaps the next would-be mass shooter will be flagged. The Patriot Act requires banks to tell the authorities if someone might be sending money to a terrorist group, but financial companies would have to decide to report that a mass shooting might be brewing.

The National Rifle Assn. objected preemptively, saying the decision was "nothing more than a capitulation to anti-gun politicians and activists bent on eroding the rights of law-abiding Americans one transaction at a time." It's important to remember that merchant codes show the type of business at which a purchase was made, not what was purchased. So rhetoric about merchant codes becoming a national gun registry is hyperbolic.

And in any case, not every transaction is of interest. Since financial institutions are required to monitor us anyway, surely we can all agree that some transactions really do warrant a second look—not just to stop fraud but also to save lives.

In a 2018 analysis of credit card usage in mass shootings, the New York Times reported that "there have been 13 shootings that killed 10 or more people in the last decade, and in at least eight of them, the killers financed their attacks using credit cards. Some used credit to acquire firearms they could not otherwise have afforded. Those eight shootings killed 217 people."

Those numbers need to be part of Florida's deliberations about SB 214 as well.

"There is a misunderstanding that the financial services industry will somehow change support of legal gun purchases, and we don't have the ability or industry to do so," said Pris-

**By LZ GRANDERSON**

Los Angeles Times

*LZ Granderson is an Op-Ed columnist for the Los Angeles Times.*



cilla Sims Brown, president and chief executive of Amalgamated Bank. It is Brown's financial institution that requested the standards organization for a merchant category code to identify gun sellers.

For her efforts, Brown received a spirited letter from House Republicans last fall accusing Amalgamated Bank of trying "to force a divisive, progressive policy onto the entire American financial system." The letter also accused the standards organization of caving "to immense far-left political pressure" and asked Brown a series of questions, including some that could be answered by reading Section 326 of the Patriot Act.

The question I have is how did an industry as large and as profitable and as omnipresent as gun retail manage not to receive a code until now. Feels purposeful. I'm sure that's probably just me.

"There are thousands of codes," Brown said. "It's not an unusual thing. It's not a radical thing. No one has been concerned about merchant codes. No one put up a fight for merchant codes being set up for libraries or media entities or other forms of organizations where rights are protected."

In fact, if gun and ammo purchases are a normal part of your life, the bank is already aware of that and the "know your customer" standard doesn't kick in. But when Stephen Paddock used credit cards to buy close to \$100,000 worth of firearms and weaponry before he killed 60 people in Las Vegas in 2017, that was out of character. If there had been a merchant code for gun retailers then, financial companies could have seen just how worrying that spending spree was.

Those numbers also need to be part of the discussion about SB 214, because those numbers are the real reason we're even having this conversation.

## Young people need solutions-oriented climate education

**W**hen I was 16, I left my Advanced Placement Environmental Science class having a full-on panic attack. In a lecture on topsoil collapse, my teacher had told us that the world had 100 years of agricultural soil left (which is not exactly true). When I asked him what we could possibly do about that, he replied that real change would require international cooperation in a way that has never happened before.

There are many impediments to transformative climate policies, and I was unwittingly experiencing one of them. It turns out that the problem-focused, panic-inducing AP Environmental Science class I took is the only standardized curriculum on that subject offered in the United States' public school system, and only to high school students at select schools.

When I started at the University of California, Berkeley the next year, I realized very quickly that "doomsday sermon" would be the theme of my environmental education. So I started teaching a class of my own design called Sustainable & Just Future. By my last semester, I had broken the record for the largest student-led course in the university's history, twice. This program, which has now enrolled over 1,800 students and counting, is popular because it offers what our professors failed to: hope, a path forward, a solutions-oriented vision for the future.

Gen Z isn't getting the education we need to survive and adapt to a climate-changed world. At the same time, 59% of young people are "very worried" or "extremely worried" about climate change, and millions have already lived through pow-

erful climate-related disasters, some of which have wiped out entire communities. The existential threat of climate change has pushed us even further away from our textbooks, as thousands have committed to skipping school every Friday to protest climate inaction, waving signs that read, "Why should we go to school if you won't listen to the educated?"

If adults want to get young people back into the classroom, they're going to have to make some changes to the education they're offering us. To do that, we need solutions-oriented environmental education that's accessible to all. We could start children off with hands-on projects like gardening or foraging in elementary school, so they're raised with essential life skills like food growing and plant identification. We could turn our public schools into havens for regional biodiversity, working to restore native species.

By the end of high school, young adults should have a robust understanding of humanity's relationship with the Earth and the limitations of the resources that it can sustainably offer. An advanced curriculum would include a deep look at the environmental implications of the materials our lives are made of, always through a social justice lens. Who does the mining? Who does the harvesting, the sewing, the truck driving, and how must the system change to work better for them?

The goal of such an education system would not only be to revive the deep ties that we have to the places that raise us, but to also inspire people to be active participants in their ecosystems. A curriculum like this could drastically change our global

**By SAGE LENIER**

Progressive Perspectives

*Sage Lenier is the founder of Sustainable & Just Future, a youth-led educational nonprofit. She is also a Public Voices fellow with The OpEd Project in partnership with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. You can keep up with her on Instagram. This column was produced for the Progressive Perspectives, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*



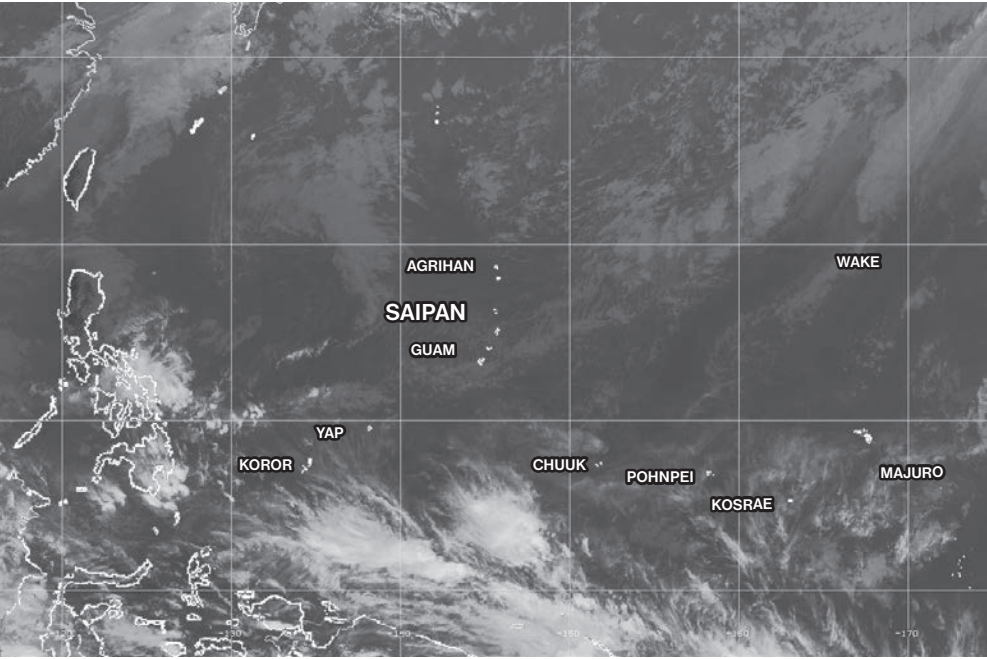
society within a very short span of time. As children learn, so too would their caretakers and communities. And the next generation of people would have a drastically different set of priorities from those who came before them.

We could have a school system that helps young people grow up well-equipped to adapt to a climate-changed world. It's true that we need more than a handful of educated activists and scientists; we need billions of people working together to meet the challenge of the ecological crisis. A better world is possible, and the environmental revolution must start with education. It's time for my generation to take control of our own education and demand that we have access to the information we actually need.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
83°	75°	83°	75°	84°	74°	83°	76°	83°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 8:23 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar shows cloudy skies and scattered showers within the coastal waters this morning. Bouys show combined seas of 8 to 11 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 75°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	81° / 75°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 78°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 74°	
Pohnpei	Showers	83° / 77°	
Kosrae	Cloudy	82° / 75°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 75°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Sunday	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	2:44 AM	2:02 PM
Friday	-	3:33 AM	2:55 PM
Saturday	-	4:20 AM	3:47 PM
Sunday	-	5:03 AM	4:38 PM
Monday	-	5:42 AM	5:27 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	75° / 60°	
Beijing	Sunny	60° / 31°	
Hong Kong	Sunny	71° / 61°	
Honolulu	Thunderstorms/Wind	78° / 70°	
London	Partly Cloudy	50° / 37°	
Los Angeles	Showers	52° / 39°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	92° / 79°	
Melbourne	Clouds	69° / 58°	
Miami	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
New York	Mostly Cloudy	44° / 41°	
Osaka	Showers	51° / 37°	
Paris	Mostly Sunny	51° / 33°	
Busan	Sunny	49° / 32°	
Rome	Showers	56° / 45°	
Salem	Thunderstorms	80° / 66°	
San Francisco	Sunny	56° / 40°	
Seoul	Sunny	45° / 25°	
Tokyo	Showers	65° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	60° / 50°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
6:12 AM	High Tide	1.48	
11:12 AM	Low Tide	1.18	
3:13 PM	High Tide	1.39	
11:11 PM	Low Tide	-0.05	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3, 6 via Incheon	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
				OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T\*Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7

ROTA TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7

GUAM TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.			
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022			
SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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# Business

## GPPC chosen as contractor of Saipan Lexus Toyota dealership



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Atkins Kroll, Inc. an Inchcape Company, celebrating 55 years of service in the CNMI, announces that GPPC Inc., a Saipan-based builder, has been selected to construct its new CNMI headquarters and AK Toyota Lexus Automotive Sales and Service Center and Vehicle Repair Shop in Puerto Rico, Saipan. The new dealership is scheduled to be completed by the Fall of 2024.

**A**tkins Kroll, Inc. an Inchcape Company, celebrating 55 years of service in the CNMI, announced its selection of a construction partner for its new Saipan AK Toyota Lexus Automotive Sales and Service Center and Vehicle Repair Shop in Puerto Rico.

GPPC Inc., a construction company based on Saipan, was selected to complete AK's \$23-million project. GPPC

Inc. is best known for high-quality government, commercial, and residential construction projects on Saipan, such as the Saipan International Airport Departure Terminal Expansion project, American Memorial Park Visitor Center Memorial Garden and Amphitheater, TSL Plaza, and the Kagman Senior High School new campus construction.

The company also completed interior buildouts for luxury boutiques in Saipan for Gu-

cci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, and The ARC.

"Announcing the selection of our new construction partner for this project brings us closer to realizing our plan to better serve our customers in the CNMI. We are proud to be working with a company based in Saipan, and GPPC Inc. has a great reputation as a quality builder with luxury experience," said Atkins Kroll president Alex Yap.

Groundbreaking for the

project is anticipated for March 2023. Construction is slated to be completed by the Fall of 2024.

AK announced its plans to build a new dealership in August of 2022, sharing details of the planned project that will be AK's first new-build property in the CNMI. The new 43,800-square-foot facility will be built along Chalan Pale Arnold in Puerto Rico on land owned by Albert LG Camacho and his family, long-standing

residents and business owners in Puerto Rico.

The new facility will include the island's first dedicated Lexus showroom, making models of the luxury brand available directly for AK's customers while providing the convenience of certified Lexus service on the island. It will also serve as the automotive company's CNMI headquarters.

"In addition to having a Lexus showroom open on Saipan for the first time, our customers will appreciate the expanded certified services for their vehicles," said Atkins Kroll president and general manager Joel Lesh. "The quality of the Lexus and Toyota brands will be complemented by the aesthetics of the building's state-of-the-art design that is also environmentally friendly. The new dealerships will include features such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels for energy offsetting, and low-noise-generating equipment."

The spacious Toyota and Lexus showrooms will be

14,244 square feet combined, more than doubling the size of AK Toyota's current location in San Jose.

The architects and project manager for the project are ARI Partners, who have recently completed extensive facility renovations for AK's Guam Dealership, including a new Toyota Showroom and Lexus Showcase.

ARI Partners designed the AK Toyota Lexus Automotive Sales and Service Center and Vehicle Repair Shop to incorporate innovative features that will minimize noise and emission levels, feature energy-saving fixtures throughout the property, and utilize the latest tools to improve employees' work experience, all while keeping the environment in mind.

Yap said, "We are committed to bringing the best to the CNMI while growing our investments and providing more career opportunities in the future."

For more information about the project, visit [ak-saipan.com](http://ak-saipan.com). (PR)

## \$10 for unlimited time at Gualo Rai indoor playground

By MARK RABAGO  
mark\_rabago@saipantribune.com  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**C**hildren ages 1-12 can play to their heart's content at Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground & Shopping Center.

Owner Jinhua Wu said they're giving away 300 coupons that entitles bearers to a \$10 unlimited playing time for children 12 years and below with the promotion ending on May 31, 2023.

For children 13 years and above, Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground still has dozens of video arcade games, basketball machines, and claw games with amazing prizes at only \$1 for four tokens.

Come to think of it, there's never a dull moment once you step inside the almost fantasy world-like wonder that is Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground.

Aside from its expansive indoor playground with a whimsical theme complete with mini house, merry-go-round, slides, sandpit, and a fully functional jungle gym, it also has over 30 arcade games; train, spaceship, and motorcycle kids rides; adult and kids hoops machines; and the always cathartic Whac-A-Mole machines.

Wu proudly said that what truly sets them apart from other indoor playgrounds mushrooming all over the island is their sheer number of gaming ma-



MARK RABAGO

Sunshine Kids Playground & Shopping Center is located next to Paradise Dental along Middle Road in Gualo Rai.

chines and video arcades.

Some of the more popular video arcade games include Tekken, Super Mario World, Sonic the Hedgehog, Bomberman, Tetris Puzzles, Pac-Man, and many other genres.

And if your kid—or even yourself—fancies little toy trinkets, then you're in luck as gashapon or capsule toy machines line up Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground's child-proof walls.

If those capsule toys are not enough, Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground also sells toys and clothes at its mini retail store inside the establishment.

And because it also operates the nearby Party and Beyond restaurant, customers at the indoor playground can readily order food and drinks from Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground.

Opened in April 2022, Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground was borne out of Wu's children lamenting the lack of indoor playground facilities on the island.

"I brought my two boys to China and everywhere you go there's indoors playground for kids...then they asked 'Mama why Saipan there's nothing?'" she said.

Wu finally brought her chil-

dren's dream into fruition after the former employee at T Galleria by DFS, Saipan got bored being a stay-at-home mom.

"So I thought maybe I should just start something even if it's in a small location. I thought it was probably good to start by selling milk tea first and that eventually became Party and Beyond that we opened in September 2021," she said.

Then seven months later, Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground opened in the same building separated only by a laundry shop and poker parlor.

Wu said so far so good as the business has been thriving



MARK RABAGO

Sunshine Kids Playground's indoor playground has a whimsical theme complete with mini house, merry-go-round, slides, sandpit, and a fully functional jungle gym.

ing as the local community has fully embraced the indoor playground even if the island is still in a pandemic.

"Last year when we opened we were very busy during the summer. Now, I can say we're full during the weekends only as there's no school."

She's also not taking any risks as far as COVID-19 is concerned, saying that she and her staff are fully vaccinated and wear masks all the time.

"We also always clean and fully sanitize the facility. We've also bought an air purifier to make sure that healthy air circulates inside the indoor playground," she said.

Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground is a welcome addition to Saipan which until lately had been bereft of big city amenities

like indoor playgrounds.

"I know Saipan is a tropical island and is good for outdoor and beach activities. But when it's raining it's also nice to treat your kids once in a while to an indoor kids playground like our's where it's air-conditioned and restaurant-quality food is available. Kids will have a great time and enjoy it," said Wu.

Located next to Paradise Dental along Middle Road in Gualo Rai, Colorful Sunshine Kids Playground is open everyday from 11am to 8pm, Monday-Thursday and Sunday and from 11am to 8:30pm, Friday-Saturday.

For more information, call (670) 488-0888 or (670) 285-1809. They also can be contacted through their Facebook page.



# Nation

## Supreme Court seems ready to reject student loan forgiveness

WASHINGTON (AP)—Conservative justices holding the Supreme Court's majority seem ready to sink President Joe Biden's plan to wipe away or reduce student loans held by millions of Americans.

In arguments lasting more than three hours Tuesday, Chief Justice John Roberts led his conservative colleagues in questioning the administration's authority to broadly cancel federal student loans because of the COVID-19 emergency.

Loan payments that have been on hold since the start of the coronavirus pandemic three years ago are supposed to resume no later than this summer. Without the loan relief promised by the Biden plan, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer said, "delinquencies and defaults will surge."

The plan has so far been blocked by Republican-appointed judges on lower courts. It did not appear to fare any better with the six justices appointed by Republican presidents.

Biden's only hope for being allowed to move forward appeared to be the slim possibility, based on the arguments, that the court would find that Republican-led states and individuals challenging the plan lacked the legal right to sue.

That would allow the court to dismiss the lawsuits at a threshold stage, without ruling on the basic idea of the loan forgiveness program that appeared to trouble the justices on the court's right side.

Roberts was among the justices who grilled Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar and suggested that the administration



Student debt relief advocates gather outside the Supreme Court on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023, as the court hears arguments over President Joe Biden's student debt relief plan.

had exceeded its authority.

Three times, the chief justice said the program would cost a half-trillion dollars, pointing to its wide impact and hefty expense as reasons the administration should have gotten explicit approval from Congress. The program, which the administration says is grounded in a 2003 law that was enacted in response to the military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, is estimated to cost \$400 billion over 30 years.

"If you're talking about this in the abstract, I think most casual observers would say if you're going to give up that much ... money, if you're going to affect the obligations of that many Americans on a subject that's of great controversy, they would think that's something for Congress to act on," Roberts said.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh suggested he agreed, saying it

"seems problematic" for the administration to use an "old law" to unilaterally implement a debt relief program that Congress had declined to adopt.

Neither justice seemed swayed by Prelogar's explanation that the administration was citing the national emergency created by the pandemic as authority for the debt relief program under a law commonly known as the HEROES Act.

"Some of the biggest mistakes in the court's history were deferring to assertions of executive emergency power," Kavanaugh said. "Some of the finest moments in the court's history were pushing back against presidential assertions of emergency power."

At another point, though, Kavanaugh suggested the program might be on firmer legal ground than other pandemic-related

programs that were ended by the court's conservative majority, including an eviction moratorium and a requirement for vaccines or frequent testing in large workplaces.

Those earlier programs halted by the court were billed largely as public health measures intended to slow the spread of COVID-19. The loan forgiveness plan, by contrast, is aimed at countering the economic effects of the pandemic.

Prelogar and some of the liberal justices sought several times to turn the arguments back to the people who would benefit from the program. The administration says that 26 million people have applied to have up to \$20,000 in federal student loans forgiven under the plan.

"The states ask this court to deny this vital relief to millions of Americans," she said.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor said her fellow justices will be making a mistake if they take for themselves, instead of leaving it to education experts, "the right to decide how much aid to give" people who will struggle if the program is struck down.

"Their financial situation will be even worse because once you default, the hardship on you is exponentially greater. You can't get credit. You're going to pay higher prices for things," Sotomayor said.

But Roberts pointed to evident favoritism.

He offered a hypothetical example of a person who passes up college to start a lawn service with borrowed money. "Nobody's telling the person who is trying to set up the lawn service business that he doesn't have to pay his loan," Roberts said.

Republican-led states and lawmakers in Congress, as well as conservative legal interests, are lined up against the plan as a violation of Biden's executive authority. Democratic-led

states and liberal interest groups are backing the administration in urging the court to allow the plan to take effect.

The justices' questions mirrored the partisan political divide over the issue, with conservatives arguing that non-college workers should not be penalized and liberals arguing for the break for the college educated.

Speaking on the eve of the arguments, Biden had said, "I'm confident the legal authority to carry that plan is there."

The president, who once doubted his own authority to broadly cancel student debt, first announced the program in August. Legal challenges quickly followed.

The administration says the HEROES Act allows the secretary of education to waive or modify the terms of federal student loans in connection with a national emergency. The law was primarily intended to keep service members from being hurt financially while they fought in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## RFK assassin Sirhan Sirhan back for 16th parole hearing

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Nearly two years ago, a California parole board voted to free Robert F. Kennedy's assassin, but the decision was later overturned by the governor.

Sirhan Sirhan will once again appear before the board Wednesday at a hearing at a federal prison in San Diego County to ask to be let out.

Even if the board rules that Sirhan is suitable for release a second time, his lawyer, Angela Berry, said she doesn't expect it to change Gov. Gavin Newsom's mind because of his "affinity for R.F. Kennedy," who Newsom has cited as a political hero.

That's why she said she's also turning to the courts. The parole board hearing comes nearly six months after Berry asked a Los Angeles County judge to reverse Newsom's denial. The case is ongoing.

Newsom rejected Sirhan's freedom in 2022, saying that he remains a threat to the public and hasn't taken responsibility for a crime that changed American history.

Berry has said the 78-year-old man, who has spent more than 54 years in prison, is not a danger to society and should be released. She said that will be the main point she and Sirhan will make to the board, again.

"They found him suitable

for release last time and nothing has changed," Berry said. "He's continued to show great behavior."

In a 3 1/2-minute message played during a news conference held by Berry in September, Sirhan said he feels remorse every day for his actions. It was the first time Sirhan's voice had been heard publicly since a televised parole hearing in 2011, before California barred audio or visual recordings of such proceedings.

"To transform this weight into something positive, I have dedicated my life to self-improvement, the mentoring of others in prison on how to live a peaceful life that revolves around nonviolence," he said. "By doing this, I ensure that no other person is victimized by my actions again and hopefully make an impact on others to follow."

Sirhan shot Kennedy moments after the U.S. senator from New York claimed victory in California's pivotal Democratic presidential primary in 1968. He wounded five others during the shooting at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

Sirhan originally was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life when the California Supreme Court briefly outlawed capital punishment in 1972.

## Last witnesses in Murdaugh case before jury sees crime scene

By JEFFREY COLLINS  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alex Murdaugh's former law partner said Tuesday that he is past his anger over millions of dollars stolen from the firm, as the final witnesses in the South Carolina double murder trial testified and the court prepared to bring jurors to the scene of the killings.

Ronnie Crosby had a testy exchange with defense attorney Dick Harpootlian as prosecutors got a chance to reply to the defense's case, including by rebutting their experts who suggested two different shooters killed Murdaugh's wife and son.

On Wednesday, jurors will ride 40 minutes to see the sprawling Colleton County property where the Murdaughs lived. No testimony will be given and they can't ask questions. Then they will return

to the courthouse for closing arguments.

Prosecutors brought Crosby back to the stand to talk more about Murdaugh stealing millions of dollars from his clients and the firm the Murdaugh family founded more than a century ago. Prosecutors contend Murdaugh thought he was about to get caught stealing and killed 52-year-old Maggie Murdaugh and 22-year-old Paul Murdaugh near kennels on June 7, 2021, to buy time to cover up the money trail.

During cross-examination, Harpootlian asked Crosby, who often represents accident victims, if going through trauma can cause people to forget details or get times wrong. Prosecutors have pounded Murdaugh for various inconsistencies and lies, including not saying he was at the ken-

nels the night of the killing when he could be heard on video recorded by his son.

"You're trying to take me somewhere you probably don't want to," Crosby said, starting a tense exchange between the attorneys.

"You're angry at him for stealing your money," Harpootlian said.

"I have had anger with him, extreme anger, Mr. Harpootlian, because what he did with my law firm, my partners, his clients, our clients — what he did to his family. What he did to so many people," Crosby said, bristling. "But you can't walk around with anger."

Harpootlian then asked Crosby if he thought Murdaugh killed his wife and son.

"I don't have an opinion. I don't have the benefit of the materials you have," Crosby said.

Murdaugh is awaiting trial on about 100 other charges, including financial crimes. Murdaugh, who has been disbarred, admitted to the thefts, which could carry decades in prison, on the stand last week.

Prosecutors also called back to the stand the pathologist who did the autopsies on the victims and their expert who studied the crime scene.

Kenneth Kinsey said a defense expert who measured the angles of the shots and concluded they were fired closer to the ground or by someone well shorter than the 6-foot-4 (1.93-meter) Murdaugh didn't take into account the shooter and Maggie Murdaugh were both moving and the gun could have been fired from different positions.

"I think his intentions were well, but his methods were flawed," Kinsey said.



# Asia

## Taiwan says 25 Chinese planes, three ships sent toward island



AP  
Two soldiers lower the national flag during the daily flag ceremony on Liberty Square of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, July 30, 2022.

**TAIPEI, Taiwan** (AP)—China sent 25 warplanes and three warships toward Taiwan on Wednesday morning, the island's Defense Ministry said, as tensions remain high between Beijing and Taipei's main backer Washington.

The ministry said 19 of those planes crossed into Taiwan's air defense identification zone while the ships were continuing to operate in the Taiwan Strait. It said Taiwan responded by scrambling fighters, dispatching ships and activating coastal missile defense systems to "closely monitor and respond."

China stages such incursions on a near-daily basis, part of what are termed "gray zone"

tactics, aimed at intimidation and wearing down Taiwan's equipment, exhausting its personnel and degrading public morale. Those also include cyberwarfare and disinformation campaigns, along with a relentless drive to deprive Taiwan of diplomatic allies.

Taiwan has responded by upgrading its fleet of F-16 fighter jets and ordering 66 more of the planes from the U.S., while purchasing a range of other weaponry and extending its mandatory term of military service for all males from four months to one year.

Relations between Beijing and Washington, Taiwan's primary ally and source of defensive weaponry, have spiraled

over China's actions toward the island, trade, technology and the South China Sea.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a visit to Beijing last month after the U.S. shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the U.S. east coast, drawing furious protests from China.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, and has been rapidly expanding its military to meet that challenge should it arise.

In memos and testimony, top U.S. officers have called for heightened preparations, saying China sees a shrinking window for action and may move on Taiwan within a few years.

and common purpose among the C5+1 countries," Blinken said in reference to Tuesday's meeting in the Kazakh capital of Astana among him and the foreign ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In those talks, Blinken repeatedly referred to U.S. support for the five countries' "sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence" in a not-so-subtle warning to the former Soviet republics that Russia's value as a partner has been badly compromised by its year-old war against Ukraine, another ex-Soviet state. (AP)

### Japan PM: Ban on same-sex marriage not discrimination

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the country's ban on same-sex marriage is not discriminatory, insisting that constitutional freedom of marriage only envisions heterosexual unions, a com-

ment that triggered criticism he is backtracking despite his recent apology and meeting with LGBTQ people. Kishida's governing Liberal Democratic Party, known for its conservative family values and reluctance to promote gender equality and sexual diversity, is virtually the main opposition to legalization of same-sex marriage and other measures of equality for LGBTQ people. Asked by an opposition lawmaker at Tuesday's parliamentary budget committee if he thinks a same-sex marriage ban constitutes discrimination, Kishida said "I don't think disallowing same-sex couples to marry is unjust discrimination by the state." His comment sparked criticism from opposition lawmakers and LGBTQ activists, who questioned whether Kishida was backpedaling to show consideration to ultra-conservatives in his party who oppose sexual diversity. (AP)

# World

## Drone attacks on Russia underline its vulnerability

A spate of drone strikes that Russian authorities blamed on Ukraine targeted areas in southern and western Russia, reflecting the Ukrainian military's growing reach.

While the attacks apparently did not inflict any significant damage, their number and scope posed a new challenge to Russia as the war dragged into a second year. One assault came as close as 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Moscow.

Some observers said the strikes could be a rehearsal for a broader Ukrainian attack on facilities deep inside Russia.

Here is a look at drone attacks on Russia, their results and implications.

### HAS UKRAINE LAUNCHED DRONE ATTACKS BEFORE?

Russian authorities have long accused Ukraine of launching regular drone attacks on power plants, oil refineries and other targets in western regions of Russia near the border.

Russian authorities also have reported repeated Ukrainian drone attacks on Crimea, most of which targeted the port of Sevastopol that hosts the main Russian naval base on the Black Sea peninsula that Moscow illegally annexed in 2014.

In December, the Russian military reported several

Ukrainian drone attacks on long-range bomber bases deep inside Russia. The Russian Defense Ministry said the drones were shot down, but it acknowledged that their debris damaged some aircraft and killed several servicemen.

After each of those strikes, Ukrainian officials stopped short of openly claiming responsibility but emphasized the country's right to strike any target in response to the Russian aggression.

In some cases, Ukrainian authorities took responsibility for the attacks deep behind the front line. That's what happened when Ukraine's top military officer took credit for ordering the August strikes on air bases in Crimea weeks after they occurred.

### WHAT AREAS DID THE LATEST DRONE ATTACKS TARGET?

Late Monday, four small drones targeted the city of Belgorod, including one that reportedly flew into an apartment window.

Another drone was downed early Tuesday over the neighboring Bryansk region in western Russia, according to local officials.

On Tuesday, a drone also hit an oil refinery in the southern port of Tuapse in Russia's Krasnodar region, damaging some equipment but missing oil reservoirs.

Some Russian reports identified the aerial vehicle as an Israeli-made Aerostar drone.

Another drone, reportedly a massive Soviet-built jet-powered Tu-141 Strizh, fell into a field in the neighboring region of Adygea, damaging a farm building.

Finally, a drone crashed on the edge of a forest close to a gas compressor station near the village of Gubastovo, less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Moscow. While it inflicted no damage, the drone appeared to target a major natural gas pumping facility and marked the closest strike yet to the Russian capital.

Russian reports identified the drone that fell near Gubastovo as a UJ-22, a small Ukrainian-made reconnaissance drone that also can carry about 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of explosives and has a range of autonomous flight of up to 800 kilometers (about 500 miles).

Ukrainian officials have not claimed responsibility for any of the attacks.

On Tuesday, Russian authorities also briefly closed the airspace over St. Petersburg, the country's second-largest city. Some reports alleged that an unidentified drone was spotted in the area, while the Defense Ministry said the skies around the city were closed as part of air defense drills. (AP)

## Fiery Greece train collision kills 32, injures at least 85

**TEMPE, Greece** (AP)—A passenger train carrying hundreds of people collided at high speed with an oncoming freight train in a fiery wreck in northern Greece, killing 32 and injuring at least 85, officials said Wednesday.

Multiple cars derailed and at least three burst into flames after the collision near the town of Tempe on Tuesday just before midnight. Rescue crews illuminated the scene with floodlights before dawn on Wednesday as they searched frantically through the twisted, smoking wreckage for survivors.

Survivors said several passengers were thrown through the windows of the train cars due to the impact. They said others fought to free themselves after the passenger train buckled, slamming into a field next to the tracks near a gorge about 380 kilometers

(235 miles) north of Athens where major highway and rail tunnels are located.

"There were many big pieces of steel," said Vassilis Polyzos, a local resident who was one of the first people on the scene. "The trains were completely destroyed, both passenger and freight trains."

He said dazed and disoriented people were escaping out of the train's rear cars as he arrived.

"People, naturally, were scared—very scared," he said. "They were looking around, searching; they didn't know where they were."

The trains crashed just before the Vale of Tempe, a gorge that separates the regions of Thessaly and Macedonia. Costas Agorastos, the regional governor of the Thessaly area, told Greece's Skai television the two trains crashed head on at

high speed.

"Carriage one and two no longer exist, and the third has derailed," he said.

Rescuers wearing head lamps worked in thick smoke, pulling pieces of mangled metal from the cars to search for trapped people. Others scoured the field with flashlights and checked underneath the wreckage. Several of the dead are believed to have been found in the restaurant area near the front of the passenger train.

Hospital officials in the nearby city of Larissa said at least 25 of those hurt had serious injuries.

"The evacuation process is ongoing and is being carried out under very difficult conditions due to the severity of the collision between the two trains," said Vassilis Varthakoyiannis, a spokesperson for Greece's firefighting service.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Blinken wraps up Central Asia tour before G20 talks in India

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is wrapping up a brief tour of Central Asia in Uzbekistan before heading to India for what is expected to be a contentious Ukraine-dominated meeting of foreign ministers from the Group of 20. Blinken met Wednesday in Tashkent with senior Uzbek officials a day after warning his counterparts from all five Central Asian nations about the dangers posed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Speaking before talks with Uzbekistan's acting foreign minister, Blinken said he believed the United States and Central Asia share concerns about Ukraine, although the former Soviet states have toed a delicate line when it comes to condemning Russia for the war. "I think there was a tremendous sense of both common challenge



# Environment

## Study: Back-to-back hurricanes likely to come more often

BY SETH BORENSTEIN  
AP SCIENCE WRITER

What used to be a rare one-two punch of consecutive hurricanes hitting about the same place in the United States weeks apart seems to be happening more often, and a new study says climate change will make back-to-back storms more frequent and nastier in the future.

Using computer simulations, scientists at Princeton University calculate that the deadly storm duet that used to happen once every few decades could happen ev-

ery two or three years as the world warms from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, according to a study in Monday's Nature Climate Change.

Louisiana and Florida residents have already felt it.

In 2021, major Hurricane Ida blasted Louisiana with 150 mph winds. Just 15 days later a weakening Nicholas came nearby, close enough for its wind, rain and storm surge to add to the problems, said study co-author Ning Lin, a risk engineer and climate scientist at Princeton.

back hurricanes caused to people.

The Ida-Nicholas combo came after Louisiana was hit in 2020 by five hurricanes or tropical storms: Cristobal, Marco, Laura, Delta and Zeta. Laura was the biggest of those, packing 150-mph winds.

After Laura, relief workers had set up a giant recovery center in a parking lot of a damaged roofless church when Delta approached, so all the supplies had to be jammed against the building and battened down for the next storm, said United Way of Southwest Louisiana President Denise Durel.

"You can't imagine. You're dumbfounded. You think it can't be happening to us again," Durel recalled 2 1/2 years later from an area that is still recovering. "The other side of it is that you can't wish it upon anyone

wood State," from all the boarded-up homes.

"We found a trend," Lin said. "Those things are happening. They're happening more often now than before."

There's a caveat to that trend. There haven't been enough hurricanes and tropical storms since about 1950 — when good recordkeeping started — for a statistically significant trend, Lin said. So her team added computer simulations to see if they could establish such a trend and they did.

Lin's team looked at nine U.S. storm-prone areas and found an increase in storm hazards for seven of them since 1949. Only Charleston, South Carolina, and Pensacola, Florida, didn't see haz-

ard s

current expectations. The reason isn't storm paths or anything like that. It's based on storms getting wetter and stronger from climate change as numerous studies predict, along with sea levels rising. The study looked heavily at the impacts of storms more than just the storms themselves.

Studies are split on whether climate change means more or fewer storms overall, though. But Lin said it's just the nastier nature and size that increases the likelihood of back-to-back storms hitting roughly the same area.

Any in-

this is very bad news," University of Albany hurricane scientist Kristen Corbosiero, who wasn't part of the study, said in an email. "We (scientists) have been warning about the increase in heavy rain and significant storm surges with landfalling TCs (tropical cyclones) in a warming climate and the results of this study show this is the case."

Corbosiero and four other hurricane experts who weren't part of the study said it made

1. Aiden Locobon, left, and Rogelio Paredes look through the remnants of their family's home destroyed by Hurricane Ida, Sept. 4, 2021, in Dulac, La. 2. Floodwaters slowly recede in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida in Lafitte, La., Sept. 1, 2021. 3. People shield their faces from wind and sand ahead of Tropical Storm Nicholas, Sept. 13, 2021, on the North Packery Channel Jetty in Corpus Christi, Texas. 4. Storm clouds from Tropical Storm Nicholas are visible behind homes of the Native American community of Isle de Jean Charles, La., which were destroyed by Hurricane Ida, Sept. 14, 2021. 5. Danielle Fontenot runs to a relative's home in the rain with her son Hunter ahead of Hurricane Delta in Lake Charles, La., Oct. 9, 2020. 6. Mark Andollina, left, and Shane Holder, remove part of a roof damaged by Hurricane Zeta from the road at the Cajun Tide Beach Resort in Grand Isle, La., Oct. 30, 2020. 7. A wave crashes as a man stands on a jetty near Orleans Harbor in Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans, June 7, 2020, as Tropical Storm Cristobal approaches the Louisiana Coast.

AP

else either."

Florida in 2004 had four hurricanes in six weeks, prompting the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration to take note of a new nickname for the Sunshine State—"The Ply-

increase. The team then looked at what would happen in the future using a worst-case scenario of increasing carbon dioxide emissions and a more moderate scenario in line with current efforts worldwide to reduce greenhouse gases. In both situations, the frequency of back-to-back storms increased dramatically from

creased frequency in sequential storms in the past was likely due to a reduction in traditional air pollution rather than human-caused climate change; when Europe and the United States halved the amount of particles in the air since the mid-1990s it led to 33% more Atlantic storms, a NOAA study found last year. But any future increase will likely be more from greenhouse gases, said two scientists who weren't part of the study.

"For people in harm's way

sense. Some, including Corbosiero, say it is hard to say for sure that the back-to-back trend is already happening.

Colorado State University hurricane expert Phil Klotzbach said the emphasis on worsening effects on people was impressive, with storm surge from rising seas and an increase in rainfall from warmer and stronger major hurricanes.

"You have to have faith and be able to move forward. You've just got to be in constant motion," Durel, the Louisiana United Way president, said. "Our neighbors mean much more than wallowing in aggravation."





# Life & Style

## Tears for school shooting survivor's 'American Idol' tryout

**SANTA FE, Texas (AP)**—An emotional audition on “American Idol” by a survivor of a Texas high school shooting prompted tears from the judges and criticism of the country’s response to gun violence. Trey Louis was one of the students at Santa Fe High School in May 2018 when another student fatally shot 10 people on campus.

After his audition, which aired on Sunday, Louis told the judges—Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Luke Bryan—that one of the reasons he wanted to participate in the singing competition was because of the shooting.

“Lost a lot of friends. Eight students were killed. Two teachers were killed. It’s just really been negative, man. Santa Fe has had a bad rap here since 2018,” said Louis, who was in an art class finishing a project when the gunman started firing in a room next door.

Perry began to cry, placing her hands over her face and bowing her head. She then lifted her head and yelled out, “Our country has (expletive) failed us.”

“Facts,” Louis said.

“This is not OK. You should be singing here because you love music,” Perry said.

Wiping away tears, Richie said: “We have tolerated this for so long, too long. It’s become a norm.”

Louis told KTRK-TV in Houston that the song he chose for his audition, “Stone” by Whiskey Myers, was in honor of his friend Chris Stone, who was one of the students killed.

The 21-year-old mattress salesman said he didn’t realize he had a talent for singing until about a year ago when he posted a video online of him singing at work. The video went viral, he said, getting thousands of views.

Just before the judges unanimously voted to send Louis to the next round in Hollywood, Perry said, “I hope that you remind people that we have to change because you know what, I’m scared too.”

“We’ve got to change and I hope you can just lead. Can you do me that favor?” Perry said.

“For myself, for my school, for you,” Louis said.

Dimitrios Pagourtzis, then a

17-year-old student, has been charged with capital murder in the shooting deaths.

Pagourtzis, now 22, has been ruled incompetent to stand trial and has been receiving mental health treatment at a state hospital since early December 2019. Earlier in February, a judge ordered that he be held at the hospital for up to another year. Santa Fe is located about 35 miles (55 kilometers) southeast of Houston.

AP

Law enforcement officers respond to Santa Fe High School after an active shooter was reported on campus in Santa Fe, Texas, May 18, 2018.



## Tom Sizemore's family 'deciding end of life matters'

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—More than a week after Tom Sizemore suffered a brain aneurysm, a representative says the actor’s family is “now deciding end of life matters.”

“Today, doctors informed his family that there is no further hope and have recommended end of life decision,” Sizemore’s manager Charles Lago said in a statement is-

sued Monday night. Lago said another statement would be issued Wednesday.

Sizemore collapsed early Feb. 18 at his home in Los Angeles and has been hospitalized since, remaining “in critical condition, in a coma and in intensive care.” The brain aneurysm was the



Sizemore

result of a stroke, Lago’s statement said.

Sizemore, 61, has acted in films like “Saving Private Ryan,” “Heat” and “Black Hawk Down.” While he received accolades for his acting,

his career foundered amid a litany of drug abuse arrests and run-ins with law enforce-

ment, including domestic violence and abuse allegations. In 2003, he was convicted of domestic violence charges against his ex-girlfriend, former Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss.

In 2017, a woman accused Sizemore of abusing her as an 11-year-old during production on the film “Born Killers.” No charges were filed.

## McCarthy defends giving Tucker Carlson Jan. 6 trove access

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is defending his decision to give Fox News’ Tucker Carlson “exclusive” access to Jan. 6 security footage of the Capitol attack, despite the conservative commentator’s own work raising false claims and conspiracy theories about the 2021 riot over Joe Biden’s election.

McCarthy vowed Tuesday

to eventually make roughly 42,000 hours of sensitive Capitol Police security videos available to the broader public “as soon as possible,” but made it clear the Fox News commentator had first dibs. The Republican McCarthy is also supportive of giving access to some of the nearly 1,000 defendants being prosecuted for their roles in the siege.

Five people died in the Jan. 6, 2021 attack and its aftermath after then-President Donald Trump encouraged a mob of supporters to “fight like hell” as Congress was tallying the election results from the states.

“I don’t care what side of the issue you are on. That’s why I think putting it out all to the American public, you can see the truth. See exactly what

transpired that day,” McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol.

“Have you ever had an exclusive? Because I see it on your networks all the time. So we have exclusive, then I’ll give it out to the entire country,” McCarthy said.

The speaker’s decision to release the mountains of police security footage has set off a firestorm at the Capitol over the way the images will

be potentially used as a political tool to rewrite the history of what happened that deadly day. Fox News is facing new scrutiny in a separate court case over its airing of false claims about the 2020 election that Trump lost to Biden.

It’s also raising new concerns about sensitive security operations at the Capitol. While video from the Jan. 6 riot has already widely aired as part of the pub-

lic hearings last summer by the House committee investigating the attack—including from the police cameras, documentarians like then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s daughter who filmed secret locations and even the rioters themselves—McCarthy is making available almost 42,000 hours of footage, three times what was first seen, from cameras stationed in all corners of the Capitol complex.

## Sister-in-law miffed when she's left out of wedding

**DEAR ABBY:** My brother-in-law and his fiancée, “Shana,” have been dating for five years. They have a beautiful son and have a date set for their wedding. I have been with my husband for four years, and married for about a year. We did not have a grand wedding celebration, just a simple city-hall ceremony accompanied by a dinner with immediate family. However, Shana is having the opposite.

She has invited my husband to be part of the wedding, but not me. I’m very disappointed because I thought we got along rather well and I considered us friends. Aren’t the brother and sister-in-law supposed to walk down the aisle together in the wedding ceremony? That’s how I have seen other couples do it. My husband also finds it strange that Shana wouldn’t ask me to be a part of the wedding. After all, I’ve been part of the family long enough. What do you think?

**OVERTHINKING IN NEW YORK**

**DEAR OVERTHINKING:** Your husband will walk down the aisle to his brother because he is part of the wedding party. No rule of etiquette decrees that because you are a sister-in-law, you must be a part of the ceremony. If you had a simple wedding for financial reasons, you can always RENEW your vows in a grand fashion. Please don’t blame your soon-to-be sister-in-law for not making you a bridesmaid. Ask her if there’s any task

you could perform—a reading, perhaps—to be involved and useful.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**DEAR ABBY:** I work with my husband in retail merchandising. A woman on our team is a few years younger than I am and very touchy-feely with my husband. She whispers in his ear and stands very close to him. My husband says that may be just the way she is. I told him he is wrong because she doesn’t do it when her boyfriend is around and she doesn’t do it to anyone else. How should I handle this?

**UPSET IN FLORIDA**

**DEAR UPSET:** Tell your teammate that from where you stand, it looks like she is hitting on your husband, and you don’t like it. Then, tell her that if she doesn’t stop, you will report it to the team leader or your boss.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**DEAR ABBY:** My daughter pledged not to have children until her mate proposed and they were married. Now, past the age of 30, she worries her biological clock will run out. Her mate says he’s ready for children, but still hasn’t popped the question, although they talk of marriage. It has been 10 years. What’s a girl to do?

**BAFFLED MAMA IN OHIO**

**DEAR BAFFLED MAMA:** As you and your daughter

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



should have realized, talk of marriage can go on for decades and beyond. If her mate wanted to be married, the two of them would be. In this case, a 30-something “girl” who wants to be a mother after marriage should pop the question HERSELF. And if his answer is no, she should move on so she can find a willing husband. 1130 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64106; 816-581-7500

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



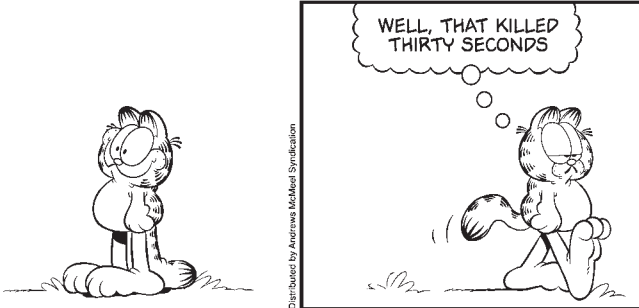
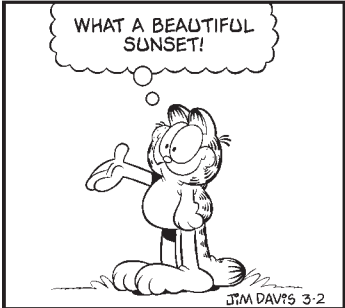
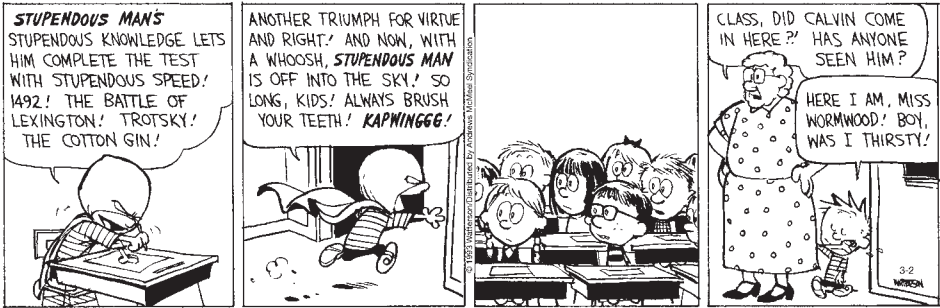
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

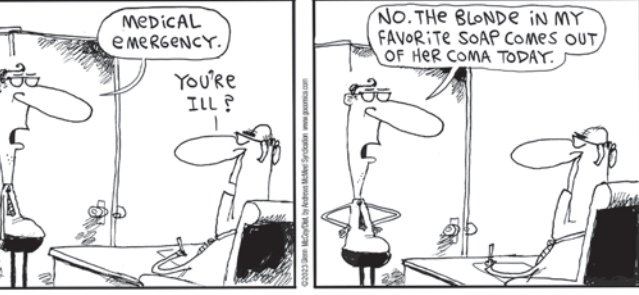
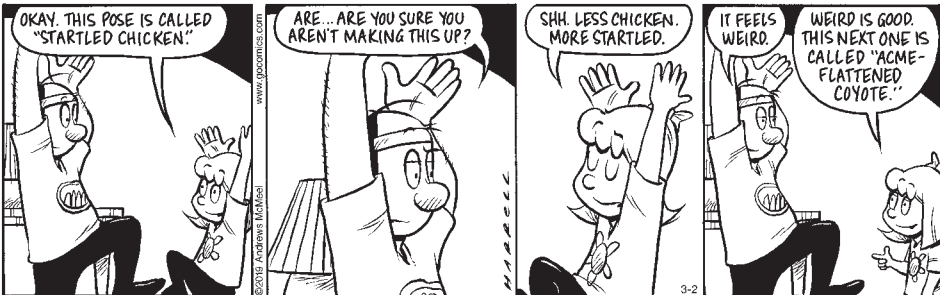


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 — Tech leader 4 Persian diet 8 Stable card game 12 Popular on a fjord 13 Capital on a fjord 14 Tactic 15 Silicon Valley city 17 Animated figure 18 — chi 19 Qualify 21 Light lunches 24 "Big Blue" 25 Past 26 Second-stringer 28 Ones for the road? 32 Jeans maker Strauss 34 Corn serving 36 Beer ingredient 37 Very small 39 Elmer, to Bugs

DOWN 1 — de-sac 2 Year in Acapulco 3 Theme of many sad songs 4 Three-dimensional shapes 5 FDR follower 6 Skin soother 7 Egypt's Mubarak 8 Very best 9 Oodles 10 Implement 11 "Auld Lang —" 16 Bond rating 20 TV schedule abbr. 21 Pretzel topper 22 Writer James 23 Take to court 27 Abysmal 29 Citrus hybrids 30 Shoppe descriptor 31 Rating unit 33 First 35 Sinbad's bird 38 Thither 40 Realty listings 43 Lucky number 45 Museum-funding org. 46 Karate blow 47 Robust 48 Incite 49 Harvard rival 53 Apt. divisions 54 Undivided 55 Plant seeds

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-2

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Bryce Dallas Howard, 42; Method Man, 52; Daniel Craig, 55; Jon Bon Jovi, 61.

Happy Birthday: Address and resolve emotional issues, clear a path to freedom and channel your energy into what matters most. Recognize your purpose, put yourself first and knock on doors that offer hope and help. Make your home efficient, a place of refuge and a revolving door for loved ones. Call the shots and change what isn't working into something in harmony with your steps forward. Your numbers are 3, 12, 20, 24, 32, 37, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Ego, over-indulgence and poor communication will contribute to problems that surface. Think twice before you battle with someone who doesn't play fair. Rethink your game plan, open your mind and look for alternative solutions. Choose self-improvement over changing others.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Avoid disruptions by doing your best to get along. Refuse to let stubbornness hold you back. Look for alternative ways to appease others and get what you want. Don't be your worst enemy when the stakes are high and the challenge is great.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Turn the tables on someone who asks for too much and request something in return. Even out the playing field, set standards and deal only with those willing to abide by the rules. Be a leader, not a follower.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Stop living in a dream world; turn what you desire into a reality. It's up to you to do the

legwork if you want to be successful. Let your intuition guide you, and you'll find your true calling.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Keep your plans a secret until you iron out the wrinkles. Limit your spending, but increase your hands-on effort to ensure everything goes according to plan. Changes will occur regarding a financial or legal matter standing in your way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Check out the competition and adjust your plans to offset anything that may jeopardize your position. Don't fear doing things differently. Your uniqueness will be what makes you stand out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): High energy is the key to getting things done. Turn your angst into the driving force that promotes doing your best. Look for any opportunity to travel, spend time with your lover or engage in a program that boosts your confidence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take a unique path and rid yourself of debt or demons that drag you down. Make amends, clear your conscience and stop worrying about situations that make you feel ill at ease. Say no to discord and yes to happiness and peace.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Spending more time nursing your personal life will help enhance your relationships. You can make improvements at home, but don't go into debt to please someone who already expects too much from you. Balance and equality make a good partnership.

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't feel you have to take sides; be a friendly observer and offer suggestions that aren't biased. Distance yourself from those who embellish, and you will bypass the problems that develop. Change begins with you. Choose wisely.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Honesty is essential when dealing with personal matters, but when it comes to business and finance, take a back seat, listen to the experts and make decisions based on facts and figures. Offering a false impression will cost you.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep an open dialogue with loved ones to ensure it will ward off discord and disappointment. Pour your heart into helping others, not overindulgence. Don't hold back about what you want and how you plan to make your wish come true.



Birthday Baby: You are unpredictable, exciting and thought-provoking. You are original and adventuresome.



• Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. • You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. • Focus and you'll reach your goals. • Aim high; start new projects. • Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	2				5		8		
		7	5	4	6		1		
5		6		2	1	3			
6			4				2		
7						1	5	3	
	5	2							6
				5					1
1	8	9	2		4				
	6			1	9		3	4	

Difficulty: ★★★

3-2

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	4	3	1	6	5	7	2	9
7	1	9	8	2	4	5	6	3
2	5	6	3	7	9	8	4	1
6	9	2	4	1	8	3	5	7
4	8	1	7	5	3	6	9	2
5	3	7	2	9	6	1	8	4
3	2	4	5	8	7	9	1	6
9	7	5	6	4	1	2	3	8
1	6	8	9	3	2	4	7	5

Difficulty: ★★★

3-1

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PELÉ (1940-2022)

Solution: 11 letters

R A O F T R E F I N N E J E I  
O E C U H F O R W A R D T E E  
S E T T H T S E B O L S R D A  
E G A S O O O R R D E O I I A  
M K V A I R P E L L T N V I F  
E R I L E N H E E N H A C E I  
R E O N S A I C E O L R S M F  
I R R P G F A M L F A A S O A E  
T O U O S E I W I M A N C N T  
E C S Y N C R A Z R U T C K E  
L S A S S I R I A U H E E C L  
E L N A T D M M R H S S R I H  
P A N E N L L A B T O O F N T  
F O R A T Y L E K R J X U X A  
D G S P O R T T G A B R I E L

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3/2 Actor, Arthur, Assiria, Athlete, Best, Brazil, Celeste, Cups, Do Nascimento, Edinho, Edson Arantes, Fans, Field, FIFA, Flavia, Football, Forward, Futsal, Gabriel, Goal Scorer, Hero, Hope, Jennifer, Joshua, Kely, King, Love, Marcia, Minister, Minor, Nickname, Octavio, O Rei, Pelé, Plays, Rosemeri, Sandra, Soccer, Sophia, Sport, Team, Writer, Xuxa  
Yesterday's Answer: Information

The NEW Volume 70 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.



# Morant, Grizzlies beat Lakers 121-109 with James sidelined

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** (AP)—Ja Morant scored 28 of his 39 points in the third quarter, had 10 assists and 10 rebounds and the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Los Angeles Lakers 121-109 on Tuesday night in the Lakers' first game since LeBron James injured his right foot.

Xavier Tillman finished with 18 points and 11 rebounds for Memphis, while Jaren Jackson Jr. and Desmond Bane scored 16 points apiece.

Anthony Davis led the Lakers with 28 points and 19 rebounds. Lonnie Walker IV scored 21 points. Austin Reaves had 17, while matching his season high with four 3-pointers.

Morant took over in the third quarter, connecting on 10 of 12 shots. That broke open a close game and gave the Grizzlies a 93-84 advantage entering the fourth.

## BUCKS 118, NETS 104

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points and 15 rebounds and Milwaukee beat Brooklyn for its 15th straight victory.

Jrue Holiday had 14 points and eight assists for the Bucks, who went 10-0 in February and have passed Boston for the best record in the NBA. They got Antetokounmpo back after he missed their home victory



Memphis Grizzlies Xavier Tillman Sr. (2) defends against Los Angeles Lakers Anthony Davis in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023, in Memphis, Tenn.

over Phoenix on Sunday with a bruised right quadriceps.

Mikal Bridges led Brooklyn with 31 points. Spencer Dinwiddie had 26 points and eight assists.

## NUGGETS 133, ROCKETS 112

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Nikola Jokic had his 100th career triple-double and Jamal Murray scored 32 points in Denver's victory over Houston.

Jokic had 14 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his NBA-leading 24th triple-double this season and 15th in the

last 20 games.

Michael Porter Jr. added 17 points and Bruce Brown had 15 off the bench to help the Nuggets to their second consecutive victory and sixth in the last seven games.

Jalen Green and Tari Eason each scored 17 points for Houston. The Rockets dropped their 10th in a row.

## SPURS 102, JAZZ 94

**SALT LAKE CITY** (AP)—Keldon Johnson scored 25 points and San Antonio beat Utah to snap a 16-game losing streak.

Doug McDermott added 19 points for the Spurs, Jeremy Sochan had 13 and Devonte Graham 12. San Antonio improved to 15-47, winning for the first time this season after trailing to start the fourth quarter.

Lauri Markkanen had 28 points and nine rebounds for Utah.

## PACERS 124, MAVERICKS 122

**DALLAS** (AP)—Tyrese Haliburton scored 32 points and won a duel of birthday boys with Luka Doncic, leading Indiana past Dallas.

Doncic had 39 points and nine rebounds on his 24th birthday but fell to 1-4 in games with Kyrie Irving since the superstars were paired in a deal with Brooklyn before the trade deadline.

Irving scored 16 points, but his 3-pointer just before the buzzer was the last of five misses from deep in the final two minutes with Dallas trailing by two.

The 23-year-old Haliburton, born on Feb. 29, 2000, was 9 of 18 from the field and 12 of 15 on free throws while adding seven rebounds and six assists.

## WARRIORS 123, TRAIL BLAZERS 105

**SAN FRANCISCO** (AP)—

Jordan Poole had 29 points, six assists and five rebounds, Klay Thompson scored 23 points and Golden State rallied past Damian Lillard and Portland.

Lillard had 25 points and seven assists to follow up his franchise-record and career-best 71-point game against Houston on Sunday night, when his 13 3-pointers were one shy of Thompson's NBA record.

The Warriors capitalized on every chance during their decisive 39-point third quarter, taking the lead for good on Thompson's 3-pointer with 1:46 left in the period on the way to winning a fourth straight at home and eighth in nine.

## WIZARDS 119, HAWKS 116

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Washington spoiled Quin Snyder's Atlanta coaching debut, getting 37 points from Bradley Beal and 28 from Kyle Kuzma in a victory over the Hawks.

Trae Young led Atlanta with 31 points.

Snyder spent eight seasons as Utah's coach before resigning last June after the Jazz were eliminated in the opening round of the playoffs. The 56-year-old Snyder says he left coaching to spend more time with his family, but the chance to lead the talented but enigmatic Hawks lured him back to the sideline sooner than expected.

## TIMBERWOLVES 108, CLIPPERS 101

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Jaden McDaniels scored 20 points, Anthony Edwards added 18 and Minnesota beat Los Angeles to snap a three-game losing streak.

McDaniels scored at least 20 points for the fourth time this season.

Paul George had 25 points and Kawhi Leonard 23 for the Clippers, who have dropped three straight. Los Angeles' last two losses before Tuesday came in overtime, including a 176-175 double-overtime loss Friday night to Sacramento in the second highest-scoring game in NBA history.

## KINGS 123, THUNDER 117

**OKLAHOMA CITY** (AP)—Harrison Barnes scored 29 points and Sacramento beat Oklahoma City for its fourth consecutive victory.

Domantas Sabonis had 22 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists and Kevin Huerter added 20 points for the Kings. They also beat the Thunder on Sunday night.

Thunder rookie Jalen Williams matched a season high with 27 points. Dario Saric, a reserve forward/center the Thunder acquired in a trade with Phoenix before the All-Star break, had a season-high 21 points. But Oklahoma City shot just 43.9% in its fourth straight loss.

## RAPTORS 104, BULLS 98

**TORONTO** (AP)—Pascal Siakam scored 20 points, Gary Trent Jr. had 19 and Toronto beat Chicago for its eighth victory in 10 games.

O.G. Anunoby added 17 points and Jakob Poeltl had 14 to help the Raptors win their fourth straight at home.

Nikola Vucevic led Chicago with 23 points and Zach LaVine had 17. DeMar DeRozan scored 13 points against his former team.

## Source: Lakers bracing for James to miss multiple weeks

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers may miss multiple weeks with an injury to his right foot, a person familiar with the situation said Monday night.

The full extent of the injury is not yet known and more test results were pending, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither James nor the Lakers announced anything about a long-term absence.

The Lakers had already ruled James—the NBA's all-time leading scorer—out for Tuesday's game at Memphis with what they called right foot soreness.

James played 37 minutes in the Lakers' 111-108 win at Dallas on Sunday, helping Los Angeles rally from a 27-point deficit. But he left the arena with a pronounced limp, with video from The Dallas Morning News showing how much the foot was bothering him.

He got hurt in the third quarter, grabbing at the ankle after spending some time on the floor in obvious pain.

But he stayed in to finish the game, noting how important it was to the Lakers' play-off hopes.

"It's been better," James said. "But I definitely wasn't going to locker room and not finish the game. The importance of this game and then the momentum that we had, I felt like we could steal one after being down."

James leads the Lakers in scoring at 29.5 points per game, and said at the All-Star break earlier this month that the team's closing stretch this season would be some of the most important games he has played—noting he didn't want to miss the postseason for a second consecutive year.

The Lakers (29-32) started Monday 12th in the Western Conference, a game from 10th and the final spot in the play-in tournament, and only 2 1/2 games behind Dallas in the race for sixth. The top six teams in each conference are guaranteed playoff berths.

If James—a 19-time All-Star, playing in his 20th NBA season—misses extended time, the Lakers' task of getting in figures to become significantly tougher.

## Kobe Bryant family settles photo lawsuit for \$28.5 million

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—The family of the late Kobe Bryant has agreed to a \$28.5 million settlement with Los Angeles County to resolve the remaining claims in a lawsuit over deputies and firefighters sharing grisly photos of the NBA star, his 13-year-old daughter and other victims killed in a 2020 helicopter crash, attorneys and court filings said Tuesday.

The figure includes a newly agreed upon payment from the county of \$13.5 million along with the \$15 million a federal jury awarded Bryant's widow, Vanessa Bryant, at a trial in August.

The agreement resolves any future claims by Bryant's three surviving daughters, related issues pending in state court, and other costs. A proposed settlement order, which a judge must approve, was filed Tuesday

in federal court.

"Today marks the successful culmination of Mrs. Bryant's courageous battle to hold accountable those who engaged in this grotesque conduct," Bryant's attorney Luis Li said in a statement. "She fought for her husband, her daughter, and all those in the community whose deceased family were treated with similar disrespect."

Mira Hashmall, the attorney representing LA County, called the statement "fair and reasonable" adding, "We hope Ms. Bryant and her children continue to heal from their loss."

Kobe Bryant, the former Lakers star, five-time NBA champion and member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, was traveling with Gianna and seven others to a youth basketball game when the helicopter they were aboard

crashed into hills in Calabasas west of Los Angeles on Jan. 26, 2020.

Deputies and firefighters responding to the crash scene shot phone photos of the bodies and the wreckage, which Hashmall argued at trial were an essential part of assessing the situation.

But the pictures were shared, mostly between employees of the county sheriff's and fire departments, including by some who were playing video games and attending an awards banquet. They were also seen by some of their spouses and in one case by a bartender at a bar where a deputy was drinking.

Li told jurors that the close-up photos had no official or investigative purpose, and were mere "visual gossip" shared out of a gruesome curiosity.

Hashmall argued that the

sheriff acted swiftly and appropriately when he ordered the photos deleted.

Vanessa Bryant tearfully testified during the 11-day trial that news of the photos compounded her still-raw grief a month after losing her husband and daughter, and that she still has panic attacks at the thought that they might still be out there and her daughters might someday see them online.

The verdict in her favor was erroneously read as \$16 million in court, but was later amended to \$15 million.

Federal safety officials blamed pilot error for the crash itself.

Chris Chester, Vanessa Bryant's co-plaintiff at the trial, was also awarded \$15 million at trial, and reached his own settlement with the county in September for nearly \$5 million more.



# Rodgers, QBs become top attractions at NFL combine



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The Green Bay Packers will continue to play the waiting game with Aaron Rodgers.

They're also ready with a backup plan.

Though general manager Brian Gutekunst's first choice still appears to be bringing back the four-time league MVP and longtime face of the team, Gutekunst acknowledged the Packers are willing to go with Jordan Love—if needed.

"I think he's ready to play. I think he's ready to be an NFL starting quarterback," Gutekunst said Tuesday, referring to Love. "He's worked really hard. He's shown a lot of progression. I know he's really eager to have that, and I think that's the next step in his progression, is to play."

First, though, Rodgers must make his call.

The one-time Super Bowl champ is scheduled to cost the Packers \$59.5 million, a prohibitively high number that would prevent the team from doing much in free agency.

Rodgers has already acknowledged publicly if he does return, he would likely redo his contract. He also has completed the "darkness retreat" he said would help him sort out his options.

Green Bay also must decide whether to exercise its fifth-year option on Love, their first-round pick from 2020 who has not played much as Rodgers' backup. Extending Love's contract through next season would cost the team



AP  
Green Bay Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst speaks during a news conference at the NFL football scouting combine, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023, in Indianapolis.

\$20.3 million in 2024.

Otherwise, the Packers next year could be facing the same dilemma the New York Giants and Baltimore Ravens now have—using franchise tags to keep their starters, Daniel Jones and Lamar Jackson—around. Ravens general manager Eric DeCosta is scheduled to speak Wednesday at the NFL's annual scouting combine.

Still, Gutekunst is willing to be patient with Rodgers and hopeful he'll have an answer before free agency begins March 15. If not, he'll be ready to go either direction.

"We'll move forward and have conversations as we go," Gutekunst said. "There will be a point here soon where we have to make some decisions moving forward."

It's a familiar scenario for Packers fans who still remember when three-time MVP Brett Favre retired in 2008, handing the job to Rodgers, Green Bay's first-round pick in 2005. When Favre later decided to return, he was eventually traded to the New York Jets.

The Jets are in the quarterback market yet again and are one of several teams now

jockeying for position to answer their own quarterback questions.

While Jets GM Joe Douglas acknowledged the team remains committed to Zach Wilson, Douglas also said team officials have spoken with the recently released Derek Carr and they plan to meet again this week.

"I can say he (Carr) left a strong impression with everybody," Douglas said. "Obviously we're going to be exploring the veteran quarterback market this offseason and we'll look at every available option."

They're not alone.

Carolina also plans to meet this week with Carr, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The person spoke to The AP on condition of anonymity because the team doesn't announce its meetings with free agents.

Two other veterans also recently hit the open market. The Washington Commanders cut Carson Wentz on Monday and 2014 Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Mariota was released Tuesday by the Atlanta Falcons.

Both teams seem content to

go with second-year quarterbacks Desmond Ridder and Sam Howell, at least for now.

"If you go back to his junior year, coming out, (Howell) is a guy that had some very good grades on him," Washington coach Ron Rivera said. "I looked at our people's grades and we had some very good grades on him, so we feel very confident in his ability. He's got a good arm."

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers also may try the young arm of Kyle Trask—if Tom Brady does not come out of retirement again. That may be out of necessity with the Buccaneers more than \$57 million over the cap.

Still, coach Todd Bowles wouldn't rule out signing a veteran.

"We understand we're over the cap," he said. "We have a long-term plan. We don't want to sacrifice one year for paying someone as opposed to sacrificing the future. But we'll go out and we'll be smart about it. It's also a desirable place because we do have talent."

The same is true of the Packers, who have already restructured the contract of running back Aaron Jones and expect promising second-year receivers Christian Watson and Romeo Doubs to continue improving next season—whether it's Rodgers or Love throwing passes.

"Obviously, he (Rodgers) is a big part—if he comes back," Gutekunst said. "He's a big part of what we're doing, but at the same time, I don't think that will really change the roster much."

By ROB MAADDI and  
STEPHEN WHYNO  
AP SPORTS WRITERS

Washington Commanders owner Dan Snyder's future is on the agenda for discussion at upcoming committee meetings in Florida ahead of the annual NFL meeting in Arizona in late March, according to a person familiar with the docket.

The person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the person wasn't authorized to release details, said voting to oust Snyder if he chooses not to sell the team remains a possibility.

Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, at a league meeting in October, said there's "merit to remove" Snyder. That would take an unprecedented vote of 24 of the other 31 team owners to happen.

Two weeks after Irsay's comments, and with multiple investigations ongoing into the team's workplace culture, finances and Snyder himself,

## Source: NFL owners to discuss Snyder at upcoming meeting

he and wife Tanya hired a firm to "consider possible transactions." Asked at the time if the Snyders were considering selling part or all of the team, a spokesperson said, "We are exploring all options."

The sales process has since included the likes of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Philadelphia 76ers and New Jersey Devils owner Josh Harris and Houston Rockets owner Tilman Fertitta getting involved to various degrees. The New York Post reported that Snyder was blocking Bezos from putting in for a bid, despite him hiring a firm to explore that possibility.

The Commanders are taking issue with the contents of a newspaper report about the sale process and demands being made by Snyder. The team, in a statement late Monday, said a story published hours earlier by The Washington Post is "simply untrue."

Citing anonymous sources,

the Post reported that Snyder and his attorneys have demanded that NFL owners and the league indemnify him against future legal liability and costs if he sells the team and threatened to sue if not. The Post said Snyder also wants the findings of a league investigation into him kept private and that his demands angered owners and renewed discussion about possibly taking a vote to remove him.

An NFL spokesperson declined to comment Tuesday on the Post report.

In the aftermath of The Washington Post story about Snyder seeking indemnification, ESPN on Tuesday reported that a federal grand jury has issued subpoenas related to team finances after prosecutors launched an inquiry into a \$55 million loan he took out without the knowledge and approval of his then-minority owners. ESPN said the criminal inquiry is being led by a

team of FBI and IRS agents.

Snyder bought out minority owners Fred Smith, Dwight Schar and Bob Rothman in spring 2021 after they sued him the previous November seeking an injunction to allow them to sell their shares of the team. That transaction was approved by league owners.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said in a statement sent to The Associated Press that Snyder and his previous minority owners "had a series of disputes" before going through mediation with an arbitrator and Commissioner Roger Goodell and coming away with an agreement. McCarthy added, "The agreement included full releases of all claims that were or could have been asserted by any party in the arbitration proceeding."

Commanders counsel John Brownlee said in a statement that the team has been fully cooperating with the Eastern District of Virginia since it received

a request for records last year.

"The requested records only relate to customer security deposits and the team's ticket sales and revenue," Brownlee said. "The team will continue to cooperate with this investigation."

A team spokesperson added that the Commanders are "completely transparent in sharing all financials with the league for their review and oversight."

Snyder and the team are still under investigation by former U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White, who was retained by the league to look into various aspects of the organization stemming from a congressional probe into workplace misconduct that also included a referral to the Federal Trade Commission for potential business improprieties, which the Commanders denied.

The Attorney General for the District of Columbia filed two suits in civil court

against the Commanders late last year: one for a scheme to cheat fans out of ticket money and another naming Snyder, Goodell and the league, saying they colluded to deceive fans about an investigation into the team's workplace culture that ended with a \$10 million fine and no written report. The Commanders settled with the state of Maryland, agreeing to return security deposits to former season ticket holders and pay a \$250,000 penalty.

An investigation by the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform, launched in October 2021 and including testimony from Snyder, Goodell and many others, said the team fostered a toxic workplace culture. A final report by Democrats overseeing the investigation said the team had a pattern of "ignoring and downplaying sexual misconduct" and what female former employees described as hundreds of instances of sexual harassment by men at the top levels of the organization.



# MHS, ACS teams to vie for HS co-ed badminton title

By LEIGH GASES

leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Both Marianas High School Dolphins and Agape Christian School teams are in the championship tournament after their last round-robin games in the co-ed high school Public School System/TakeCare Badminton Interscholastic League held at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Saturday.

MHS Team 2 leads Bracket 1 with 70 points, while MHS Team 1 leads Bracket 2 with 67 points. Second in Bracket 1 is ACS Team 1 with 58 points and in Bracket 2 is ACS team 2 with 43 points.



The Dolphins 2 defeated Saipan Southern High School 2 after sweeping the girls singles, boys singles, girls doubles, and mixed doubles for 3 points each event, for a final score of 14-1. Their only loss was in the boys doubles when they couldn't hold on for a perfect score and settled for 2 points.

The Dolphins 1 team then collected a 12-3 win against the Mantas 1 after they swept the boys doubles, girls singles, boys singles, and girls doubles events. However, they couldn't get past the mixed doubles event and went 0-3.

For the Torchbearers 1 campaign to the championship tournament, they defeated Saipan Inter-



LEIGH GASES

Agape Christian School's Eunice Xu is seen in action in the last round-robin games in the co-ed high school Public School System/TakeCare Badminton Interscholastic League held last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

national School Team 1, 14-1. The Torchbearers claimed a sweep of 3 points each in the boys doubles, girls singles,

boys singles, and mixed doubles—save for a missed game in the girls doubles for 2 points.

The Torchbearers 2 team

claimed their spot in the championship round after they bested Grace Christian Academy Team 1, 13-2. The

Torchbearers blazed through all matches of the girls singles, boys singles, and girls singles events, but missed one game each in the boys doubles and mixed doubles.

In Bracket 1, SIS 1 ended the season with 36 points, GCA 2 got 33 points, SSHS 2 had 16 points, and Tinian High School had 12.

In Bracket 2, SSHS 1 garnered 42 points; Kagman High School had 41 points, GCA 1 had 23 points, and SIS 2 had 8 points.

MHS 1 will take on MHS 2, while ACS 1 will go up ACS 2 in the semifinal match this Saturday, March 4.

In the final championship round the following Saturday, March 11, ACS 2 will face off against MHS 2 and MHS 1 will challenge ACS 1.

## APELO

From Page 20

In the 73kg weight class, Emmanuelle Aquino went home with a bronze medal after he lifted a total of 186kg. His best snatch was 83 kg and his best clean & jerk was 103kg.

Raymond Olopai went against Apelo in the 81kg weight class and bagged a bronze for his total weight lifted of 184kg. His best snatch was 87kg and his best clean & jerk was 97kg.

Apelo, who has been lift-

ing for 13 years now said that the experience was very positive as always. "It was a great crowd and weightlifting community." He also competed in Guam in 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic.

When asked who among Palau and Guam were the toughest to compete with, he said "Competing with the other islands was enjoyable [and] always fun when you are around new and familiar faces. I did not compete with the same athletes [from the Pacific Mini Games] but there were some athletes from the Mini Games who competed in

separate weight categories."

This time around, Apelo said he did not hit any personal bests but that he actually went down from his original weight class of 89kg to 81kg.

Despite not hitting his best numbers, Apelo said that "I could've done better but you know you can't let bad days get to you. Train and get better" but when he won first place, "I felt upbeat and happy that I was able to accomplish what I set out to do."

He said that he will compete in the last upcoming qualifier to try and make the CNMI Weightlifting National

Team so as to compete in future events such as the Micronesian Games and the Pacific Games. He thanked God, his wife, kids, and friends and family that have supported him in his lifting journey.

Although San Nicolas was the lone competitor in his weight class, he improved his overall lifting performance from 278kg to 289kg.

He said that he tries to hit his personal bests during competition. This time around, he said he attempted it at a lower body weight and will also drop down in weight for the last qualifier this March.

Limes, a 29-year-old avionics tech at POI Aviation, has been weightlifting for two and a half years now. It was his first international competition and said that "It was cool to reunite with some of the athletes

from the Mini Games, one of which I had competed against in the games."

He said during his lifts, he was so focused that he doesn't remember seeing faces in the crowds besides the judge. "I just shut out all outside distractions, listened to my teammates' advice and let the adrenaline take over."

Limes set his new competition PB for the snatch but did not get a PB in the clean & jerk and said "Even though I won first in my division I'm still a bit disappointed in myself for not doing as well as I thought I would." But with that, he is looking forward to working harder "to produce the same results that we got from the Mini Games if not better."

He then thanked his family, the CNMI Weightlifting Federation, Derek Cutting,

and Latte Built Gym staff, and Guam Weightlifting for their hospitality.

Twenty-eight-year-old Olopai, for his part, said that he was nervous in his first international competition but that he pushed through. He said that going up against teammate Apelo was tough but he was happy that he competed. Olopai added that he hopes to make the national team and represent CNMI in the upcoming games.

CNMI Weightlifting Federation president John Davis said that the performance of the athletes last Saturday did not surprise him at all. For now, he will not speculate on who may or may not be ready yet for selection to the national team.

The women's open results will be posted in the next editions of *Saipan Tribune*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Angel San Nicolas attempts a snatch lift in the 102kg weight class during the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday.



MARK RABAGO

Leonardo Apelo Jr., seen here during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, recently won gold in the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday.

## CABRERA

From Page 20

sario and Anella Igitol with 44 and 25 points, respectively.

Like his little brother, 13-year-old Kimason is also celebrating his birthday this March 9.

"I feel happy and good to have won the race and dedicate this to my mom and dad. The weather was very good and the race was fun,"

said Kimason, who thanked Uncle Ibo and the Ericco Racing Team.

Kimason also goes to MCS.

Both boys' mother, May Cabrera, said she's proud of Rockson and Kimason's achievements on the racetrack.

"My kids are very athletic, something they got from their dad, the late Frank Cabrera. They started playing soccer when they're 6 years old and up until now. They

started learning how to ride dirt bikes in 2020, after a year we decided to switch them to ATVs. Their uncle, Mark 'Ibo' Borja, trains them every week and takes care of the bikes and everything they need and needs to be done to their bikes," she said.

The results of other divisions in the February edition of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

## HIRO

From Page 20

years old Ashley became the youngest swimmer selected for the Guam Swimming Championship and there she won the first of many swimming medals.

Kimura said Aasish had a little bit of an advantage over her older sister as he already had an idea of how the club worked from Ashley having joined the club earlier.

"However, it also became a shackle for him at the same time. His older sister was going to break NMI records one after another! She went to almost every meet and won all the time," he said.

While there may have been some pressure on the young Aasish, it was pretty clear early on that he wouldn't let it bother him because in his mind he and his sister were equals. That overconfidence originally hampered his development, but he eventu-

ally out-grew it and became a hard worker.

"Aasish practiced hard, so when he was 8 years old, he broke the very high-level NMI record, which was said to be unbreakable for 10 years. I believe that this is where his self-reliant spirit awakened. From here, Aasish's raging rush began," said Kimura.

Aside from their persistence in the pool, it also helped that Ashley and Aasish also studied the sport with a passion when they're not swimming.

"They were very smart kids. They thought a lot about swimming on their own, researched, and studied. They were the kids who understood 10 when I taught 1. When I visited their home before, there were a lot of goals pasted in front of their desk."

And the other important point, Kimura said, was that their parents were also very intelligent and always encouraged their children to do their best.

"This is more important

than their children's own ability. I think there were some hardships after moving to the U.S. mainland, but they made greater progress there as well. It is proof that their current coach is so wonderful. I am really happy they were blessed with a great coach there," he said.

Asked whether the siblings would have accomplished what they achieved in Nepal if they continued swimming on Saipan, Kimura said he believes they would have.

"If they were still on Saipan and kept practicing with Tsunami Saipan, I'm sure they might be able to mark Nepal records like this time."

The Tsunami Saipan coach wishes his former wards the best and hopes for their continued success in the sport.

"I really hope they are not too satisfied with this. I believe they can climb to higher stages. Especially for Aasish, Team USA is not a dream. I want them to always aim higher and do their best," he said.





Morant, Grizzlies  
beat Lakers 121-  
109 with James  
sidelined  
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# Saipan Tribune Sports

MHS, ACS teams  
to vie for HS co-ed  
badminton title

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## Apelo, Limes, San Nicolas golden in Guam



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, silver medalist Dominic Uson of Guam, gold medalist Jason Limes of the CNMI, and bronze medalist Peter Paul San Nicolas of Guam during the awarding of the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday.

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

**H**eavy lifters Leonardo Apelo Jr., Jason Limes, and Angel San Nicolas topped their respective divisions in the Guam Open National Championships 2023 last Saturday at the Guam National Guard Center in Barrigada, Guam.

Apelo competed in the open 81kg weight class against three other lifters; Limes was in the 109k+ division against two other lifters; while San Nicolas was the lone competitor in the 102kg weight class.

For 35-year-old Apelo, his best snatch was 120kg and his clean & jerk was 145kg for a total weight lifted of 265kg.

As for Limes, he lifted

121kg in the snatch and 145kg for the clean & jerk. He lifted a total of 266kg. He improved from 260kg to 266kg and competed against Dominic Uson and Peter Paul San Nicolas.

San Nicolas' best snatch was 124kg and his best clean & jerk lift was 165kg for a total of 289kg.

See APELO on **Page 19**

## Hiro proud of former wards Ashley, Aasish



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach Hiroyuki Kimura poses with Ashley and Aasish Dangol in this file photo.

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach Hiroyuki Kimura couldn't be more proud of former swimmers Ashley and Aasish Dangol.

The siblings recently made waves in their parents' home country of Nepal after they broke national records left and right.

"I'm so proud of Ashley and Aasish's performance in Nepal. I started coaching Ashley when she was just 5 years old and Aasish when he was 3 years old. But they didn't immediately

show their swimming talent," he said.

Kimura said Ashley, in particular, cried when she started out at Tsunami Saipan.

"She couldn't enter the pool and during practice she cried and ran out of the pool. It was a very hard time for me but a great memory. When she was 7 years old, she was not selected as a member of the 8-and-under girls relay. That must have been very frustrating for her, but her progress from there was amazing."

In the same year, at just 7

See HIRO on **Page 19**

## Cabrera siblings gets advance birthday wish

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Brothers Rockson and Kimason Cabrera were the best riders in mini four wheels last Sunday after winning the Pee wee Class and Mini ATV Class, respectively, of the

2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race at the Cowtown Race Track.

The 8-year-old Rockson, a Mt. Carmel School student, got an early birthday present by topping the February Marianas Racing Association race with a perfect 50 points.

Last month's winner, Nakoa Torres, was the only other rider in the four-lap division and finished with 44 points.

"I'm very good and happy with the win. I want to dedicate the win to my mom, Uncle Ibo, and the Errico Racing Team," said Cabrera who competed aboard his ever

dependable DRR 50cc 4x4. Uncle Ibo is Mark Borja.

Rockson celebrated his birthday yesterday, March 1.

Kimason, meanwhile, came through in the five-lap Mini ATV Class aboard his DRR DRX 90. He finished with 45 points, followed by Keoni Ro-

See CABRERA on **Page 19**



LAO ZHANG  
Rockson, left, and Kimason Cabrera in action during the Pee wee Class and Mini ATV Class of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

